

A STATEMENT OF THE FAITH
OF
WORLD-WIDE METHODISM

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ACTION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The following is the text of a resolution which was offered in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Birmingham, Ala., May 7, 1906:

“While reaffirming our absolute faith in our Twenty-five Articles of Religion, we do not believe that in their present form they meet the existing needs of the Church as a statement of the doctrinal system of evangelical Methodist Arminianism.

“Believing that the different branches of world-wide Methodism that are represented in the Ecumenical Methodist Conference can and should unite in the preparation of such a statement of our common faith as is needed in our day, and believing that this General Conference should take such steps as may be necessary to secure in the early future the coöperation of other representative Methodist Churches in the preparation of a new statement of our faith, we therefore offer the following resolution:

“*Resolved*, That the College of Bishops be requested to appoint a commission of five members, one of whom shall be a bishop, and all of whom shall be members of the next Ecumenical Methodist Conference, which shall invite other branches of Methodism to unite with us in the preparation of such a statement of our faith and such an expression of our doctrinal system as is called for in our day, and this commission shall represent our Church in the preparation of the same.”

The first sentence above quoted was later by consent omitted from the resolution, which was then referred to a special committee, who brought back the following report:

“We recommend the passage of the resolution herein proposed with the understanding that the preparation of this new statement of doctrine shall be undertaken by the commission only when such coöperation on the part of other representative branches of Methodism shall have been secured as shall give to the statement prepared an ecumenical character and make it an expression of the faith of world-wide Methodism. This commission shall report back to this General Conference four years hence the result of their labors.”

The report of the committee was adopted by the Conference May 14, 1906.

NOTE.—A large part of the matter contained in this pamphlet is reprinted from the *Methodist Review* of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for July, 1906. It is unnecessary to remark that in this pamphlet the author is writing for himself alone and in no sense for the commission of five, of which he chances to be a member by appointment of the Bishops.

W. F. T.

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BY W. F. TILLETT, D.D., LL.D.,

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METHODISM is now universally conceded to be one of the greatest religious movements in the entire history of the Christian Church, and John Wesley is recognized by men of all schools of thought as one of the greatest religious leaders and ecclesiastical statesmen that the world has ever seen. Every great movement in history calls for interpretation. To interpret truly and adequately a great and beneficent movement of God in history, and to set forth the great moral and spiritual truths that gave it life and power, is to make a contribution of real value to the progress of Christian doctrine, and tends to the promotion of that more perfect faith and knowledge of the Son of God which is the goal of Christian fellowship and unity. Methodism has now had time to come to a knowledge of itself, to come to rational and religious self-consciousness in the largest and best sense of that term; and the world has also had time to come to a knowledge of what Methodism is. The world has been interpreting Methodism from its beginning with varying degrees of correctness and incorrectness. The times and conditions are now ripe for Methodism to define and interpret itself both for its own sake and because of its significance to the whole world. Such a definition and interpretation is a duty which Methodism owes to itself and owes to the world. To do this will give it greater faith in its faith, and will make its faith a greater influence for good among its own adherents and in the larger Christian world.

At the last session of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held in Birmingham, Ala., a resolution was introduced proposing to invite all the representative

The Signifi-
cance of
Methodism
in History.

A Movement
to Unite
World-wide
Methodism

branches of world-wide Methodism to unite with us in the preparation of a statement of that system of Christian faith and doctrine which Methodists have always believed, taught, and preached from the beginning of their history to the present time. An unusual amount of time was devoted to the consideration of this resolution—a considerable part of three days. A large number of speeches were made on both sides, and several members of the College of Bishops, responding to invitations from the Conference, took part in the discussion of the question and made speeches for or against the resolution. The vote was finally taken by ayes and nays, the roll being called, and the clergy and laity voting separately. The resolution was carried by a total majority of forty-four, twenty-seven clerical and seventeen lay. A Commission of five was appointed to extend this invitation to other branches of world-wide Methodism and to represent our Church in the preparation of the proposed statement of faith, if the invitation should be accepted by a sufficiently large number of Methodist Churches to secure for the new statement an ecumenical character. Bishop A. W. Wilson, senior bishop of the Church, was appointed by the College of Bishops as Chairman of the Commission, and this appointment was endorsed by special vote of the entire Conference. This Commission is to report back to the General Conference four years hence, and should such a statement of faith as is proposed be prepared in coöperation with other branches of Methodism, it will still remain for the General Conference to sit in judgment upon it, and only when it shall have been approved by this highest court of our Church can it be recognized as an expression of the faith of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. This movement is one of such far-reaching significance and importance as to make it fitting to call attention to some of the many reasons that justify the action of the Conference in passing this resolution.

representative and expressive of what a Church believes. A catechism is a simplification of the contents of a confession of faith, while a systematic theology is an enlargement and amplification of such confession. The preparation of a confession is properly the work of several individuals acting jointly in a representative capacity for the whole Church. It ought to embody the wisdom of many representative minds and be genuinely expressive of the faith of the Church as a whole as to the great, cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion and the distinctive doctrines for which a Church stands. A systematic theology, on the other hand, is necessarily the work of an individual, and must bear the stamp of the author's individuality, and represent his conception and exposition of the system of Christian doctrine in its details and in its entirety. It is desirable that a Church should have many systematic theologians, many writers of varied gifts to enrich its literature by their presentations of truth. A Church, however, needs but one Confession of Faith, provided it is a clear and satisfactory statement of all the important and cardinal doctrines which that Church believes and teaches. That individuals should differ in many ways in their conceptions of truth and in their statements of doctrine is, within limits, rather desirable than otherwise. Such liberty of opinion and utterance is a sign of healthful intellectual life, and in turn ministers to the largest and best moral and spiritual development of the Church. A Church's common Confession of Faith should undertake to express itself only on the great essentials of Christian doctrine for which that Church stands in the Christian world, and should not go needlessly ly into details, should not invade that realm where liberty of opinion and utterance is both common and desirable. A hard and fast and definite line cannot, it is true, be easily drawn between essentials and nonessentials in doctrine, but it does not follow from this that this distinction is therefore unreal or unimportant. On the contrary, it is both real and important. While individuals should have, and will ever have, large liberty in matters of theological opinion, there is a large and important body of truth and faith in which all genuine Methodists are agreed the world over. It is our faith in these great essential truths of Christianity and

Difference Be-
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Nonessen-
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these distinctive doctrines for which Methodism stands which it is now desired shall be embodied in the proposed statement of our faith.

Four Different Methods of Legislation Concerning Doctrinal Standards.

Whenever a Church wishes to legislate with regard to its Articles of Religion and doctrinal standards, there are four possible methods of procedure: (1) *Revision*—This is suggested where a creed or Confession that has hitherto been entirely satisfactory is to be retained, but where various changes, both verbal and doctrinal, are needed in order to adapt it to new conditions and to a changed faith. This is not what is here proposed.¹ It is not proposed that the Twenty-five Articles of Religion shall be revised any more than it is proposed to revise Wesley's Sermons and Notes. It is not a revision of faith, but a statement of faith, that is desired. Methodism has never had a Confession of its faith prepared. (2) *Supplement*—If a Church's Articles of Religion are entirely satisfactory as far as they go, but are simply incomplete, a supplementary statement could be made containing the additional Articles needed, no changes being made in the Articles which should be retained. This was what some favored in the late General Conference, but the suggestion did not prevail. (3) *Restatement*—This would meet the case if there had already been a statement of faith that completely covered the ground and had come to be out of date merely in the language or forms of thought employed—this would be similar to a revision. But as there has never been any attempt at a complete statement of the faith of Methodism heretofore, it is not accurate to call what is proposed a "restatement." (4) *A New Statement of Faith*—If what is needed is a new and complete statement of faith and doctrine such as has never been made hitherto—such a statement as shall formulate the system of doctrine that has always been held by a Church and is contained partly in Articles of Religion, and partly in sermons, expository

¹The action of the General Conference appointing the Commission was taken with the distinct understanding, on the part of all those who voted for it, that the Twenty-five Articles are not to be altered in any way, but are to remain in the Discipline where they now stand. Those who signed the original resolution and those who advocated its adoption affirmed in unqualified terms their absolute faith in these Articles.

notes, and other doctrinal standards—then it is proper to designate what is proposed simply as a new “statement of faith.” This is what was proposed by the General Conference at Birmingham—the preparation of a statement of the faith of world-wide Methodism such as has been believed, taught, and preached by the spiritual children of John Wesley from the beginning of their organization as a Church. Such a “statement” will have, it is true, some features in common with a “revision,” others suggestive of the nature of a “supplement,” and yet others that resemble a “restatement”; but none of these terms is so appropriate or accurate as the term employed in the original resolution passed by the General Conference—a “statement of the faith” of world-wide Methodism.

The beginning of every great religious movement in history means not an abandonment of anything that is true and good, but (a shifting of activity and emphasis from things that are less essential and of minor importance to things that have come to be considered more essential and of greater importance in the spiritual or the intellectual or the practical life of the Church.) Any attempt at a definition and interpretation of Methodism must recognize three facts: (1) That it gives an importance to, and places an emphasis upon, religious experience and spiritual life greater perhaps than has characterized any other branch of the Christian Church. (2) It stands for a distinct type of doctrine which, while holding many things in common with other Churches, places the emphasis upon certain truths—truths concerning God’s Fatherhood and love and man’s freedom and moral accountability, concerning Christ’s love and atoning death for all men, concerning the Holy Spirit and his agency in the soul of the individual and in the life of the Church, and other truths—that serve to distinguish it among the different types of faith that exist in the Christian Church. (3) It stands for a distinct type of Church polity which emphasizes more strongly perhaps than any other branch of the Church has ever done two notes as the all-important attributes of the Church, namely, the evangelical and the evangelistic—the former term meaning that we attach no saving significance and val-

Three Notable Features of Methodism.

Experience.

Doctrine.

Polity.

ue to the sacraments, as some other Churches do, but place the whole emphasis upon faith in Christ as the one and only condition of personal salvation; and the latter term meaning that the Church exists for the one supreme purpose of saving sinners, of saving the whole world. Christian experience and life are closely related to faith and doctrine. These act and react upon each other and together determine the type of Christian character in the individual and the moral and spiritual power of the Church, which is the collective body of believers organized for the salvation of the world. We wish to point out the significance of each of these cardinal and correlated features of Methodism.

How Christian Experience and Life Determine Doctrine.

The theology of any age [says a distinguished American theologian] is largely an expression of the Christian experience of that age. The general experience of any given time, with its characteristic peculiarities, grows up into a style of thinking, a moral and spiritual consciousness, from which there is no escaping. It influences the understanding of the Scriptures. It limits and modifies religious thought. Theology is formed in it as in an atmosphere. The theologies of to-day are part and product of the Christian life of to-day, the true offspring of the present Christian age. This is why they differ from previous theologies. If the theology of a time is various and changing, it is because the life of the time is various, growing, transitional. The vital Christian experience of any time is the best interpreter, for that time, of God and eternal life. It is the experimental nature of Christianity that makes Christian theology so fresh and living as it is. Progressive experience makes an ever-growing Church, and out of the ever-growing life of the Church comes an ever-growing theology, with the indwelling Spirit of God as the guide of its progress. Theology can never stand still while the divine life of the Church is moving forward.

I regard evangelical Methodist theology as a splendid example of the truth set forth in these words.

Methodist Doctrine the Outgrowth of Experience and Life.

“It was not new doctrine but new life that the first Methodists sought for themselves and for others,” says Bishop McTyeire in beginning his “History of Methodism”; and yet it is none the less true that that new life in its growth and maturity has produced new doctrine. As, however, the “new life” was, strictly speaking, nothing but a return to, and a fresh realization of, the religious experience of apostolic times, so the “new doctrines” which Methodism brought to the Church and the world in the eighteenth century were the old doctrines of primitive and apos-

tolic Christianity reaffirmed. But certain it is that Methodism now stands for a distinct type of evangelical Christian doctrine quite as much as it does for a distinct type of Christian experience and life.

We believe that the type of doctrine for which world-wide Methodism stands and has ever stood represents the most reasonable, self-consistent, and scriptural system of Christian doctrine in existence. Shall it go forever unformulated? Do we not owe it to ourselves, to other denominations, to the unregenerate world, and to the cause of Christian truth to state clearly and concisely, in brief and systematic form, that which we believe to be the true system of Christian doctrine? Has not the unregenerate world in many of its attacks upon Christianity largely mistaken Calvinism for the doctrine of the Christian Church, even as it long mistook Romanism for Christianity itself? Can anything but good come to ourselves or to others from giving clear, brief, and pointed expression to our evangelical system of doctrine?

If a Church has doctrines—and every Church, must have them—those doctrines must be taught and must be preached. To be taught and preached, they must be stated by somebody. If it be true—and it certainly is true—that one cannot be an intelligent member of a Church and be ignorant of that Church's doctrines, then is it of the utmost importance for a Church to have her doctrines stated plainly, simply, and comprehensively somehow, somewhere, by somebody. Not only does every theological teacher feel the need of such a statement in his work with young preachers, but every pastor who seeks to make intelligent Methodists of his young converts and maturer members needs it, and every missionary at work in the foreign field needs it, and every well-equipped Sunday-school teacher needs it. A Church's failure to prepare such a statement of its doctrines can, it would seem, be explained in only one of three ways: either (1) because it is impossible for the Church to secure such a statement of its faith as will prove satisfactory and acceptable to the entire Church—which position should never be taken until the effort has been fairly made to secure what is desired; or (2) because it is deemed unnecessary

Methodism's
Duty to
State Its
Faith.

The Statement
of Doctrines
a Necessity
to a Church.

and undesirable to have such a "statement" prepared officially, it being thought best to leave it to individual teachers and preachers to state all doctrines to their pupils and hearers in whatever way they may think best—which would be to underestimate the value to teachers and preachers, as well as to all students and converts, of a carefully prepared "statement" which should represent the best judgment and the highest wisdom of world-wide Methodism; or (3) because it is feared that such a "statement," when prepared, will be too narrow, rigid, and binding, unduly restricting the individual's liberty of opinion and utterance—which could only mean that the statement is not going to be what in our case has been proposed, or else that the individual having this fear is conscious of being out of accord with his Church in some of its fundamental doctrines and for that reason fears trouble for himself. None of these reasons are valid as against the many reasons that may be given why every Church should have prepared a statement of its faith which, while allowing all liberty of opinion that can be desired, will be of great service to all pastors and teachers, whether of theology or in the Sunday school, who are anxious to guide and instruct the young people of the Church in whatever will make their faith sound and their characters strong. Very little is being done by our pastors and Sunday schools to indoctrinate our people—and I use this term in its best Christian sense, not in any sense that would make doctrines a synonym for narrow sectarianism and polemics, the very association of which idea with the word has brought doctrinal preaching into disrepute in our day. But our pastors and teachers are not wholly to blame for the meager and inadequate instruction in doctrine which they give the people. The Church is in part responsible, and will continue to be responsible until it provides a simple and clear, yet comprehensive, statement of our Christian faith, which may be used as a handbook of doctrine helpful alike to teachers and students, to pastors and people, everywhere.

Its Educational Value for Indoctrinating Our People.

Six Qualities of an Ideal Statement of Faith.

In proportion as it is necessary to have doctrines, then it is necessary to have them clearly stated and formulated, and this is all that a Church's "Confession of Faith" means. It is a brief, clear,

logical, and complete statement of all the cardinal and important doctrines of Christianity as understood by that Church. It should be: 1. Brief—not scattered through ponderous volumes, or even one large volume, but made up of brief but luminous statements not discussing but defining truth. 2. These statements should be, not ambiguous, concealing and hiding the thought; but simple, clear, and transparent as to the meaning intended to be conveyed. 3. It should be logical and self-consistent, both as a whole and in its individual statements. Calvinism claims to be a most logical system; and evangelical Arminianism is certainly none the less so. 4. A Confession should be complete: it should omit no doctrine that is important and cardinal in the Christian system. Every vital doctrine of Christianity should be implicitly, if not explicitly, presented in a Confession of Faith. 5. It should be supported by abundant Scripture proof for every statement made, especially proof taken from God's last and best revelation made in the New Testament by his Son. 6. It should place the emphasis upon the doctrines that need most to be stressed in the day that calls it forth. In proportion as these six qualities—brevity, perspicuity, logical self-consistency, completeness, scripturalness, and timely emphasis—characterize a Confession, in that proportion will it be a useful and powerful exponent of the faith it represents, commanding the respect of the world and influencing the thinking of the world.

Every Church or family of Churches that has a distinct type of doctrine and a well-defined system of theology should have such a Confession or Statement of its Faith as the embodiment and authoritative expression of its creed. Methodism the world over is now and has always been a unit in its evangelical Arminian creed. Differ as they may in the matter of Church polity, the various branches of Methodism have but one faith as to doctrine. Methodists are not among those who deprecate creeds, affirming that the Bible, as it is and in itself alone, is creed enough. There are denominations of Christians that affect to oppose creeds, maintaining that they are unnecessary and unscriptural, and have a tendency to make Christians narrow and

Methodism
Not a Creed-
less Church.

bigoted. But where is another denomination more intensely narrow and bigoted in their interpretation of the Bible than those "Christians" who claim to recognize nothing but the Bible as their "Confession of Faith"? Methodism believes in having a faith and in being able to define that faith. It has a doctrinal system of which it is not ashamed. It may well be proud of its evangelical doctrinal system: for among the potent factors that have helped it to achieve the marvelous results that have crowned these hundred years of preaching, its doctrinal system is doubtless, next to its religious experience, the most powerful.

Influence of
Methodist
Arminian-
ism Upon
Calvinism.

When John Wesley began preaching, Arminianism, both on the Continent and in England, and in America as well as in Europe, was regarded as a heresy almost if not quite as dangerous and pernicious as Arianism, Socianism, or Pelagianism. Through the influence of Methodist preaching that which was a hundred years ago regarded as a rank heresy has not only become orthodox, but it is to-day unquestionably the best expression extant of what is known as evangelical Christianity. Not only has Methodism transformed Arminianism from a so-called heresy into a recognized orthodox type of faith, but this same Methodist Arminianism has been silently undermining the popular faith in what is known as Calvinism, until to-day a "revision of creeds" is the order of the day for all Calvinistic Confessions; and this is not simply because these creeds have become inadequate and out of date, but because in some important respects they have ceased to be believed. Every revision proposed is toward Arminian theology. From no creed did Arminianism meet with more pronounced and persistent opposition than from Calvinism. The disciples of John Calvin to-day, however, affiliate with Wesleyan Arminians the world over, and Methodists love Presbyterians and fellowship with them as they do with few if any other Christians taken as a body. If, however, the two creeds are coming nearer together, as they surely are, it is certainly not because the Methodists are modifying their Arminianism. Hear what the learned and liberal-minded Calvinist Dr. Philip Schaff said on this point in his

memorable address before the Pan-Presbyterian Council at Edinburgh, Scotland, some years ago:

The scholastic Calvinists of the seventeenth century mounted the Alpine heights of eternal decrees with intrepid courage, and reveled in the reverential contemplations of the awful majesty of God, which required the damnation of the great mass of sinners, including untold millions of heathen and infants, for the manifestation of his terrible justice. Inside the circle of the elect all was bright and delightful in the sunshine of infinite mercy, but outside all was darker than midnight. This system of doctrine commands our respect, for it has produced the most earnest and heroic Christians; but it is, nevertheless, austere and repulsive. It glorifies the justice of God above his mercy; it savors more of the Old Testament than of the New, and is better at home on Mount Sinai than on Calvary. "God is love," and love is the only key that can unlock the deepest meaning of his words and works.

Calvinism as
Defined by
Dr. Schaff.

The greater liberality of modern Calvinism shows itself especially in the doctrine of predestination and infant salvation. The problem of predestination, and of the relation of the divine sovereignty and human responsibility, is not solved yet, either philosophically or theologically, and will perhaps never be solved theoretically until we see face to face. But there is a practical solution in which all true Christians can agree—namely, that all who are saved are saved by the free grace of God, without any merit of their own, and this is Calvinism; and that all who are lost are lost by their own guilt in rejecting the gospel sincerely offered to them, and this is Arminianism. Good Calvinists preach like Methodists, as if everything depended on man; good Methodists pray like Calvinists, as if everything depended on God. St. Paul himself represents the fact that God works in us both the will and the deed as the reason why we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling. This may be logically inconsistent, but finite logic is not the ultimate standard of infinite truth. If Presbyterians preach on the mystery of predestination at all, which is very seldom, they never forget to mention human freedom and responsibility and to trace man's ruin to his own unbelief. No Reformed Synod (at least on the Continent) could now pass the rigorous canons of Dort against Arminianism, which, after a temporary defeat, has silently leavened the National Church of Holland, and which, through the great Methodist revival, has become one of the most powerful converting agencies in Great Britain and America. The five knotty points of Calvinism have lost their point, and have been smoothed off by God's own working in the history of the Church.

Moderation of
Modern
Calvinism.

That Calvinism, a system of theology containing so many doctrines that are open to objection and just criticism, should have so long dominated the faith of Protestant Christianity is doubtless due to its having found strong expression in so many able Confessions of Faith. But for the Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter Catechism, not to speak of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, we believe Calvinism

Influence of
the West-
minster
Confession.

would have been long ago rejected by all reasoning men as a true expression of their doctrinal belief, a thing which is now being done in all parts of the Christian world—as shown by the revisions and new statements of faith that are being made among different Churches. Children and young ministers were so thoroughly indoctrinated in the Catechism and Confession that its theology could not be lightly or quickly cast off. But if a system of theology, so opposed in many of its distinguishing doctrines to reason and to the spirit and genius of Christianity, could attain to such power and exert such an influence over the whole Church as to dominate it for over two centuries in spite of its misplaced emphasis and more serious errors, by means of its clear and forcible embodiment in a Confession and Catechism, how unlimited would be the power and influence of a Confession of Christian Faith that should place the emphasis where the New Testament places it—upon the Fatherhood and love of God rather than upon his sovereignty and justice, upon the largeness and graciousness of Christ's atoning work for all mankind rather than upon the limitation and partiality of redemption, upon the moral free agency and responsibility of man rather than upon the unconditional election and reprobation of men before they are even born. Had there been in existence for the past hundred years so clear, concise, logical, and satisfactory a statement of evangelical Arminianism as the Westminster Confession is of Calvinism, we believe that it would have helped to hasten by well-nigh a century that modification and passing away of high and rigid Calvinism which our unformulated faith has more slowly helped to accomplish by the close of the nineteenth century. Calvinists are welcome to appropriate any or all of our Methodist doctrines, for they are the birthright of all Christians. The problem with our Calvinistic brethren seems to be how to get the doctrines of unlimited atonement and moral free agency into their creed and yet retain its Calvinism. It cannot be done except at the expense of the logic of the system. To hold to these two doctrines and yet at the same time to believe in unconditional election in eternity by the divine will, is, logically, an intellectual impossibility.

Where a Creed
Should Place
the Empha-
sis.

That these two distinctly Arminian doctrines have long been demanded by the advocates for a revision of the Westminster Confession may be shown by two quotations from eminent Presbyterian divines. In a public discussion of the subject of revision, some time ago, Dr. MacCracken, then Vice Chancellor of New York University, said:

There was a certain choice given us by the President of Princeton, in his recent paper, between Augustine and Comte, Jonathan Edwards and John Stuart Mill—if I rightly recall the names—at any rate, between Christian necessitarians and anti-Christian necessitarians. I respectfully decline to choose. I am like the colored man who, when told by his preacher, "There is a broad road that leads down to destruction, and a narrow road that leads up to perdition," said, "Then this colored man will take to the woods." I betake myself to the free territory of a self-determined will. I leave the explanation of exactly how God renews my will to the unexplained and inexplicable mysteries of the Almighty. I say with Dr. Hodge, the younger, in his Philadelphia lecture delivered shortly before his death: "The need of the hour is not to emphasize foreordination, but to unite with our Arminian brethren in putting all emphasis and concentrating all attention on the vital fact of human freedom."

Notable Utterances of Presbyterians.

Dr. MacCracken, of New York.

Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, in the same discussion, said:

If now we are going to retain this preterition idea in our Confession, then we must be true to it in our preaching as Presbyterian ministers, and on occasion declare it in all frankness. We shall be obliged to address our congregations somewhat after this manner: My friends, I am sorry to say it, but as a Calvinist Presbyterian I am bound to say it, that Christ did not die for all. There is a certain amount of fatalism in the case. Some men are damned, and not only that, but congenitally damned, damned before they are born, hated of God even in the moment of conception.

Dr. Parkhurst, of New York.

"Oh no!" said Dr. W. M. Paxton, interrupting the speaker as this point.

My good brother Paxton says, "Oh no." Well, it is a pretty hard way of stating the case, and I would hardly have ventured to put it in this way if I had not heard Dr. Paxton's exposition of the matter last Monday afternoon. But the story of Jacob and Esau, as interpreted by the hyper-Calvinists, means all that, when you tell the whole thing out in flat-footed English. Now if I concluded that that was a scriptural doctrine, and that salvation was not absolutely free to every creature, I would tear my Geneva gown to shreds, and rip up my Bible into paper rags before another Sabbath, and my elders and deacons and all my Church membership, I believe, would stand by me.

It is certainly a notable sign of the times when a Presbyterian theologian so able and scholarly and broad-minded as the late

Dr. Bruce, of Scotland.

Dr. A. B. Bruce, of Scotland, expresses himself in the following language:

What to do with our creeds has become for all the Churches a burning question. That these creeds, centuries old, no longer express perfectly, or even approximately, the living faith of the Church, is being frankly acknowledged on every side. The free expression of the faith and spiritual life of former generations, they have become a bondage to the spirit and a snare to the conscience.

He thinks what is needed is a "return to the Gospels and to the Christianity of Christ," and that "a fresh intuition of Christ and the new religious life that would flow from it" would result in a "fresh formulation of Christian belief, bearing an entirely different stamp from that of the historical Protestant confessions." What is this most truly representative theologian of modern times describing and seeking here but such a statement of doctrine as that now proposed for the faith of world-wide Methodism?

**Methodism's
Oppor-
tunity.**

**New Credal
Statements
by Different
Churches.**

Now this is Methodism's great providential opportunity for a forward movement. The present widespread dissatisfaction with Calvinism, being due in no small degree to the healthful working of the leaven of evangelical Wesleyan Arminianism, is a providential call to us to claim our rights and go up and possess the land. New statements of faith have been prepared, and others are being prepared, by different branches of the Christian Church; some of these statements are revisions and others are new statements of faith. The Congregationalists, who were formerly in full sympathy with strict Calvinism, have found it necessary to draw up a new statement of their faith and teachings; and every change which they have introduced, so far as it concerns differences between Calvinism and Arminianism, has been a modification of their Calvinism and the adoption of a statement of faith more in accord with the teachings of evangelical Wesleyan Arminianism. The Congregationalists and Presbyterians and Methodists of Canada are on the eve of coming together in one Church with a common statement of Christian faith. While the new statement which they have prepared is not altogether such as Methodists alone would have made and cannot, therefore, prove wholly satisfactory to all Methodists, yet

we can but be impressed with the fact that the dominant tone of these new "Articles" is Arminian and Methodistic and not Calvinistic. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church withdrew from the regular Presbyterian Church nearly a century ago on doctrinal grounds and announced a credal platform which was in every important particular, except one, in accord with Methodist Arminian theology. The Presbyterian Church from which they withdrew has recently made a supplementary declaration of its faith in terms so liberal that the Cumberland Presbyterians have been invited back with the understanding, distinctly stipulated and widely published, that they will not be expected to change their faith in any particular in subscribing to the present standards of faith and doctrine in the Presbyterian Church;² and the union of these two Churches has just been consummated. These are great and significant movements, full of interest to Methodists; and yet it must be evident to every one that none of these credal statements can be free from embarrassment and compromises. They cannot prove entirely satisfactory. This is Methodism's opportunity—the opportunity of world-wide Methodism—to draw up such a statement of Christian faith and doctrine as shall not only mark a great forward movement, but prove a mighty force in unifying Christian thought and faith throughout the world. Methodism owes it to itself and to the world to do this. All that Methodists have to do is to give forth a clear and strong expression of the faith which they have believed and the doctrines which they have preached for a century and a half—a statement which can be easily read and understood

Methodism's
Opportu-
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odism's
Duty.

²At the last session of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church that welcomed back to its folds the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the following resolutions, which were offered by an ex-Moderator, Dr. J. D. Moffatt, were adopted as a supplementary declaration concerning the belief which is now expected of those who join the Presbyterian Church: "(1) That in the Presbyterian Church no acceptance of the doctrines of the Church is required of any communicant beyond personal faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world and sincere acceptance of him as Lord and Master. (2) That ministers, ruling elders, and deacons, in expressing approval of the Westminster Confession of Faith, are required to assent only to the system of doctrine established therein, and not to every particular statement. (3) It is further declared to be no longer allowable to interpret that

by all—and it will do more than anything else will or can to rally the modern Christian world around a common standard at once evangelical and evangelistic, emphasizing and exalting Christ to his true place as Head of the Church and Saviour of the world. Methodism cannot afford to let this opportunity go by unimproved.

Why Methodism was Long Misunderstood and Misrepresented.

That the opponents of Arminianism so long misunderstood and misrepresented it is not altogether their fault. Not having a concise and authoritative expression of this system accessible, they were compelled to get their views and representations of Arminianism from the writings of individual men. Hence the system has been held responsible for the vagaries of all who claimed to be Arminians. The semi-Pelagian Limborch has been quite as authoritative a teacher of it as Episcopius or Arminius himself, and the imperious and ill-tempered Archbishop Laud has been made to represent it quite as much as John Wesley, the devout but semi-Arian Whitbey quite as much as the evangelical Richard Watson or John Fletcher. If we could have induced the misinterpreters and critics of our theology to learn what it is by reading the writings of Wesley and Fletcher and Watson, they would not have misunderstood and misrepresented and condemned it. But critics, even though fair-minded and honest, will not search through ponderous volumes of theology to find out what a Church believes and stands for. But they would have read what we believe and stand for, if it had been presented in a succinct and clear statement of faith. Methodism would have done well to provide this long ago.

Different Creeds to which Methodism is Debtor.

Methodism is debtor to several creeds of the past. Of these the Apostles' Creed is first in order of importance and of time, though it is not known when it was written or who wrote it.

system of doctrine in any fatalistic sense." Of course there are many "particular statements" to which the Cumberland Presbyterians will not give their assent. This third declaration is remarkable in that it concedes that the Westminster Confession has not only been interpreted in a "fatalistic sense" in the past, but such interpretation has been allowed. Is it surprising that an increasing number of Presbyterians are now calling for a Confession of Faith which shall not need any supplementary declaration forbidding readers to interpret it in a "fatalistic sense"?

The Nicene Creed was drawn up by the first great Ecumenical Council of the Christian Church, which was held at Nicæa in 325 A.D. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, which were drawn up about the middle of the sixteenth century, are of especial interest to Methodists. This is the creed to which John Wesley subscribed in early life and under which subscription as a minister of the Church of England he remained until his death. These Thirty-nine Articles are universally acknowledged to be Calvinistic in the type of theology which they contain;³ but nothing is more certain about John Wesley than that he was not a Calvinist but an Arminian in his faith and preaching. An authoritative statement of early Arminian faith is found in the "Confession" which the Remonstrants of Holland drew up in opposition to the theology of the Synod of Dort, which was more intensely Calvinistic than the Thirty-nine Articles. The Westminster Confession of Faith, drawn up by the Presbyterians of England about the middle of the seventeenth century, also contained more of Calvinism than the Thirty-nine Articles. Our Twenty-five Articles of Religion, as is well known, came from these Thirty-nine Articles. The theology of the entire Protestant Christian world was dominated by Calvinism from the time of the great Lutheran Reformation in the sixteenth century till the influence of evangelical Arminianism, represented by Wesley and his followers, began to be felt in the Christian world.

There are many reasons why the brief statement which the Arminians (Remonstrants) presented to the Synod of Dort in 1618 does not suffice as a Confession of Faith for modern Arminianism. In the first place, it is too brief, covering only those points

The Arminian Confession.

The Remonstrants of Holland and the Synod of Dort.

³See, for example, Art. XVII. on "Predestination and Election": "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honor." Note also the second part of the original Article IX. on "Original or Birth Sin": "And therefore in every person born into this world, it (original or birth sin) deserveth God's wrath and damnation; and this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, etc."

then at issue between the Remonstrants and the Calvinists. It is a well-known fact that the Synod of Dort was a "packed jury" called together for the express purpose of condemning Arminianism, and this it did with a vengeance. The Remonstrants had but a poor showing there, being unjustly and even shamefully dealt with by the Synod. The persecution of the followers of Arminius which followed this Synod presents one of the darkest chapters in the history of Protestant Christianity. But persecution does not destroy the truth. The leaven of Arminianism spread until it thoroughly permeated, modified, and liberalized the theology of the National Church of Holland, as Dr. Schaff has stated in the quotation above given. But unfortunately, the new system which was so strongly and scripturally presented in the writings of James Arminius and Simon Episcopius developed, in its later representatives, semi-Pelagian and rationalistic tendencies which are as repugnant to modern Arminianism as represented in the Methodist Church as they are to Calvinism. With the degenerate and unsound school of religious thought in Holland which now bears the name of Arminianism or Remonstrant theology Methodism has very little agreement. The Arminianism of Holland, even in its earliest and purest form, was but a theological and intellectual system at best. Its highest purpose seems to have been to prove that the doctrines of Arminianism as opposed to Calvinism constituted the true doctrinal system of Christianity. Proving this point, it had, or seemed to have, nothing more to do. The Arminianism of Wesley and the Methodists, on the other hand, was intensely spiritual and evangelical. With theology as such they had little to do. They loved not theology for its own sake, but only as it was an embodiment of the truth of the gospel capable of being transmuted into spiritual power for the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of believers. The theology of Wesley and his followers is the Arminianism of Holland baptized with the Holy Ghost and infused with spiritual life. It is the theology of a Church that is "Christianity in earnest," that believes in and enjoys experimental religion, that is on fire to save souls and carry the gospel to the whole world. While the

Arminianism of the Remonstrants was content to prove the moral free agency of man and an unlimited atonement as being true against the erroneous Calvinistic doctrines of election and partial redemption, the Arminianism of Wesley, accepting them as true, began to practice them, to live them out, to plead with every man to decide for Christ because he was free, and to carry the gospel to every man because Christ died for all. The theology of Methodism is Arminianism put into practice for the salvation of souls and the evangelization of the world. The theology of Methodism, therefore, is quite different from that of the early Remonstrants, even in its purest form, and should always be designated as Evangelical or Wesleyan Arminianism. It contains and emphasizes many doctrines that concern the experience of religion in the soul and the salvation of sinners and the spread of the gospel, about which early Arminianism was practically silent.

But have we not doctrinal "standards" enough? We have, and so many of them that we have all the greater need of a "Statement"—the General Rules, Twenty-five Articles, and other parts of the Discipline, and Wesley's Sermons and Notes. Now what we sorely need as a Church is that the doctrinal system contained in these standards shall be formulated and set forth in a series of statements covering all that is important and cardinal in our doctrinal system, and this in as small a compass as is consistent with accuracy, clearness, and completeness. It should be done in terms and modes of thought suited to the day in which we live; and if it is not warm with spiritual life and does not glow with evangelical fire and light, it will be because those who undertake to formulate their faith are unequal to their task, and not because our doctrines are lacking in spiritual life and the fire of evangelical faith.

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, from which our Twenty-five Articles were taken, were written in 1551 by Cranmer (probably), being approved by King Edward and others in authority. As first drawn up they were forty-two in number; but after changes by Bishop Parker and further alterations which reduced the number to thirty-nine, they were adopted

A Sore Need
of Methodism.

The Thirty-
nine Arti-
cles. 1551.

by the English Convocation in 1562-63; but not until the Convocation of 1571 did they receive their present final form.

The Twenty-five Articles. 1784.

In 1784, at the organization of Methodism in America, Mr. Wesley selected twenty-four of these Thirty-nine Articles, omitting fifteen entirely and abridging and altering some of those retained, and sent them over by Dr. Coke. They were adopted by the American Methodists at the "Christmas Conference" of 1784, the twenty-third of our present number being prepared especially for America and added to the twenty-four, thus making the Twenty-five Articles as we now have them. But it is now in order for us to ask: Is the only statement of doctrine which Methodism is ever to have to be that written by Cranmer three hundred and fifty years ago and two hundred years before Methodism was born? A hundred times more able to write Articles for us was John Wesley than Cranmer, yet never a one did he write. In abridging the Thirty-nine Articles for the Methodists of America he certainly displayed good sense and admirable judgment, but many of our important and cardinal doctrines are not even alluded to in these Twenty-five Articles.

Anti-Romish Elements in the Articles.

The Thirty-nine Articles were written originally as much against Roman Catholicism as they were for the positive statement of English Protestant doctrine. Indeed, the dominant characteristic of these Articles that most profoundly impresses a modern reader is the intense anti-Romish spirit that everywhere prevades them. Take, as a specimen, the Article that defines the Church: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same. As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith." In this last sentence (which Mr. Wesley wisely omitted in his abridgment) we can discover the keynote of the entire Thirty-nine Articles. Not only do these Articles time and again name and denounce the specific errors of Rome, but even the positive elements in them are expressed in terms which show that they are meant to

be a protest against Romish doctrine. This intense anti-Romish spirit of a former generation also found expression in the Westminster Confession, which went so far as to declare that the pope of Rome is the Antichrist, or man of sin, described in the New Testament. Perhaps as much as one-half of the matter contained in the Thirty-nine Articles may be designated as anti-Romish. About one-third of our Twenty-five Articles, pruned as they were by the hand of our great leader, are yet plainly anti-Romish. The eleventh Article (supererogation), fourteenth (purgatory), fifteenth (speaking in a tongue not understood by the people), sixteenth (clause against five Romish sacraments), eighteenth (transubstantiation, etc.), nineteenth (of both kinds), twentieth (sacrifice of the mass), twenty-first (celibacy)—these eight of the twenty-five were written (in whole or in part) for the purpose of denying Romish errors. Now, this may have been all right three hundred and fifty years ago at the time when these Articles were originally written, at which time Roman Catholicism was all-powerful and denied, with its anathema of death, the right of Protestantism to come into existence. Nor shall we say that Mr. Wesley did not act wisely in retaining many of these anti-Romish Articles one hundred and twenty-two years ago—he had rare good judgment in meeting the religious needs of his day. But we do undertake to say that a Confession of Faith written for our day, when Protestantism dominates well-nigh all the most powerful civilized nations of the earth, can ill afford to devote one-third or one-fourth of its strength to condemning the sacramentarian and other superstitious errors of Romanism. The need now is for clear and positive statements of truth, not denials of the various errors in existence in other Churches. There are a hundred errors that our Church is called on to encounter and deny, as subtle, potent, and dangerous to us as those enumerated above; but we do not need Articles to be drawn up against them. Denunciations of error belong to polemical theology, and at times to the pulpit and the press, but not to a Confession of Faith.

If the Twenty-five Articles are entirely satisfactory as an expression of our Methodist faith and entirely adequate to our

What is Need-
ed in Our
Day.

The Twenty-five Articles Inadequate as a Statement of Methodist Doctrine.

present needs, then plainly we do not need any new statement of our faith. If any one seeking light and knowledge for himself as to the great cardinal doctrines distinctive of Methodism has found these Articles to be just what he wanted, and if any pastor desiring to direct intelligent young converts and thoughtful inquiring members into an understanding of Christian doctrine as held by the Methodists, has found them to meet his needs,—if by actual and constant use of the Articles these and others have found them to be entirely satisfactory,—surely *they* will be justified in opposing any movement looking toward the preparation of that which in their judgment we already have, namely, an adequate and satisfactory statement of our faith. But the man who makes but little use of the Twenty-five Articles for himself or in the instruction of others, and who feels that he does not need any new statement of faith that might be prepared, being indifferent to all such things, is not the man who should oppose efforts to prepare a statement of Methodist faith put forth by men who profoundly appreciate the value of creeds and want them for themselves and for use in the instruction of others. I am persuaded that it is the judgment of at least three-fourths of all the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, who are serious and devout students of our Church's doctrinal literature, that the Twenty-five Articles of Religion are not a sufficient and satisfactory statement of the doctrines of Christianity as believed and taught and preached by the people called Methodists.

There are four notable particulars in which the insufficiency of the Twenty-five Articles to meet the needs of twentieth century Methodism will appear to every careful student of our theology:

1. They are expressed in the scholastic forms and terms of sixteenth century thought, whereas we need to have the great truths they contain expressed in twentieth century terms and forms of thought in order to make them most intelligible and serviceable to the Church of to-day.

2. Reflecting the spirit of the age in which they were written, they place the emphasis, both in what they affirm and in

Four Points of Insufficiency.

Expressed in Sixteenth Century Forms.

Emphasis Misplaced.

what they condemn, upon the sacraments and upon certain Romish errors, as compared with the moral and spiritual truths of the Christian religion which are the all-important elements of faith and doctrine that need in our day to be most clearly stated and most strongly emphasized.

3. These Articles are insufficient because of their omissions. They not only contain no statement of the notable "five points of Arminianism" contended for by the early Remonstrants in opposition to "the five points of Calvinism," but none of what may be termed "the distinctive doctrines of Methodism" are found in them. Such doctrines as the witness of the Spirit, regeneration, Christian perfection, and other like doctrines that have characterized the faith and experience and preaching of Methodism, from the beginning, find no recognition and expression in these Articles. The Church of to-day needs a concise statement of doctrine that shall reflect faithfully and fully the spirit of that evangelical type of faith and experience that is set forth in the Sermons and Expository Notes of John Wesley.

We can but feel that world-wide Methodism realizes this need—the Methodism of England, Australia, and all the foreign mission fields no less than the Methodism of America. Many an unseemly and needless and hurtful dispute among Methodists might have been avoided if the wisdom and piety of world-wide Methodism had earlier sought divine guidance in formulating a statement of its faith that should be at once sane and clear, scriptural and luminous—a statement that should not interfere with that liberty of faith and independence of utterance which belong to all intelligent and truth-loving souls, but which would be a real help in guiding into the truth those who are the easy victims of error.

The notable and historic "five points of Arminianism" alluded to above are not dead issues but a vital and essential part of the Arminian faith of modern Methodism. They concern a true definition and statement of (1) predestination and election as conditioned on the foreknowledge of God; (2) the atonement of Christ as unlimited in its purpose and efficacy, making possible the salvation of all men who repent and believe; (3) man's

Omission of
All that is
Distinctive-
ly Arminian
and Meth-
odistic.

A Need of
World-wide
Methodism.

The Five
Points of
Arminian-
ism.

inability by nature to save himself from sin and the consequent necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; (4) the affirmation of man's free agency in that while he may be and often is irresistibly convicted of sin by the operations of divine grace, yet under conviction he can and often does resist the further gracious influences of the Holy Spirit and willfully continues in sin; and (5) the possibility of apostasy on the part of those who are truly regenerated in that while divine grace sufficient for their perseverance is pledged to them from God, they may of their own free wills neglect to use this grace and thus forfeit their sonship and be finally lost. Every one of these is a doctrine of cardinal importance. We call special attention to two of them.

Predestination as Defined by Arminianism.

The emphasis of present-day faith and preaching is certainly not upon the doctrines of predestination and election, and we certainly have no desire to place it there; and yet there is probably no duty that Methodism owes to the Christian world more imperative than its obligation to define these important and essential doctrines of the Bible which are logically at the very foundation of all theology. Calvinism has long defined these doctrines in such a manner as to make them an expression of what has been called "theistic fatalism," representing the sovereign will of God as determining absolutely in eternity the destiny of every human being without any reference whatever to his foreseen character and conduct. Now Methodism, believing as it does in the true freedom of the human will no less than in the sovereignty of the Divine Will, owes it to the world and to the cause of Christian truth to give such a definition and presentation of these doctrines as shall be at once faithful to the sovereignty of God as a Father and to the freedom of man as a moral being created in the image of his Father. Divine predestination, as explained by Calvinism, is utterly irreconcilable with the freedom of man; but divine predestination, conditioned on the foreknowledge of God, as explained by Arminianism, is in perfect accord with the free agency of man. Now what is needed is for Methodism to bring this doctrine forth from its doctrinal "standards" where men will not go to find it, and give it brief,

clear and strong statement in a form that will be easily accessible to all, and helpful to many who need help at this point.

If there is one doctrine which more than any other worthily represents Methodist theology to the world and commends it to the acceptance of modern Christian minds, it is the doctrine of the unlimited atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ in that he has made possible the salvation of every human being, and has also made possible a full salvation from all sin. And yet this most characteristic and glorious doctrine of our system finds no adequate expression in our Articles of Religion! Is it strange that some of the spiritual children of John Wesley now plead that this precious doctrine of our faith which has had so large a place in our preaching shall also have a place of primary importance in that statement of our faith which represents us to the world?

Nor are we, in writing thus, unmindful of a sentence in Article Twenty which seems to be a happy expression of our Methodist doctrine of atonement: "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone." Now this is certainly language that is most agreeable to Methodist ears; and yet, strange as it may seem, these words were written with no thought whatever of our doctrine of unlimited atonement in mind—indeed, they were written by Calvinists who not only did not believe in our doctrine at all, but who believed that Christ died only for the elect, and that none, not even elect and regenerate believers, can be saved from all sin until death. These words are followed immediately by others which serve to explain why they were used: "Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit." The Romish Church teaches that the oblation of Christ was not finished on the cross but is continued by the priest in the sacrifice of the mass; and while the merits of Christ's death avail at baptism to remove the guilt of original sin, the pardon of actual sins committed after baptism is

Unlimited
Atonement
Inadequate-
ly Stated.

The Origin of
Article
Twenty
Explained.

to be secured by personal penance, the sacrifice of the mass and priestly absolution. It was to condemn these sacramentalian errors of the Church of Rome that the Calvinistic English Reformers wrote the Article under consideration and gave it the title it now bears ("The one oblation of Christ *finished* upon the cross"), and were so particular to specify that "*the offering of Christ* once made is that *perfect* redemption, propitiation, and *satisfaction* for *all* the sins of the whole world *both original and actual*; and there is *none other* satisfaction for sin but that alone." Surely then these words cannot be properly appealed to as an adequate statement of the Methodist doctrine of unlimited atonement, the two essential features of which are: (1) Christ died for all sinners alike, and thereby made possible the salvation of all; and (2) He died to save us from all sin, and salvation from all sin is the privilege of every believer here and now in this life; both of which statements were denied by those who wrote this Article.

Written from
a Calvinistic
Point of
View.

4. The insufficiency of these Articles to meet the needs of modern evangelical Wesleyan Arminianism will further appear when we recall that the original Thirty-nine Articles from which they were taken were written from the Calvinistic point of view. This fact is made manifest not only in those statements which are so pronouncedly Calvinistic that Mr. Wesley was compelled to omit them from his Twenty-five Articles, but in many other statements which while not containing positively Calvinistic utterances are yet weak as declarations of Arminian faith and doctrine. In other words, an Arminian not only does not want a Calvinist to write his definition of predestination and election, which definition as a matter of course will be strongly and positively Calvinistic, but he prefers that the Calvinist should not write his definition of God or sin or the atonement, because while these latter statements may not be positively Calvinistic they will probably be negatively so; they will be weak statements of doctrine as compared with what an Arminian would write. Although Arminianism and Calvinism have much in common, yet their points of view and their methods of approaching the same truth are so different that it is bound to show itself in the definitions they give. Our Twenty-five Articles are not Calvin-

istic in any of their statements, at least not positively so, because Mr. Wesley went through them and cut out of them the positively Calvinistic utterances and clauses and phrases that were in the original Articles; but they are all statements of doctrine written originally by a Calvinist rather than what we could desire, statements written originally by an Arminian and wholly from an Arminian point of view.

Let me illustrate what I mean by a few examples. Take the first Article on God and the Holy Trinity: "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible; and in unity of this God-head there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Now there is no Calvinism here, but I venture to say that if five evangelical Arminians like John Wesley, John Fletcher, Adam Clarke, Thomas Coke, and Richard Watson could have been brought together to prepare an Article on God, while the Article would have contained much that is in this statement before us, it would have contained something that is not here. It would have contained more of Christ's great doctrine of the Fatherhood of God; it would have contained much of that attribute of God that Christ magnified above all others, his love; and next to that it would have contained something about his holiness. These two moral attributes, love and holiness, that are recognized universally as the crowning attributes of Deity, are not even mentioned in this Article! Is it conceivable that the children of John Wesley could write an "Article" on God and never once mention either his holiness or his love? Now I would not have any of the attributes or facts mentioned in this Article omitted; but I would have an Article for modern Methodism that shall place the emphasis upon his Fatherhood and holiness and love. This is where the faith and teaching and preaching of Methodists with reference to God place the emphasis; then let us have an Article of Religion on God that will also place the emphasis there.

Love and
Holiness
Not Men-
tioned
Among
God's At-
tributes.

**The Social
and the Eth-
ical Sides
of the Incar-
nation Need
Emphasis.**

In like manner, I think an Article that should be drawn up expressive of Methodist faith as to Christ the Son of God would omit no important truth now contained in our second Article, but I think it would place the emphasis differently from where it is placed there and be more suggestive of the Christ of the four Gospels, of Christ the Saviour of men, than this Article is.* It would assert his divinity in no uncertain or ambiguous terms, and while continuing properly to put the emphasis on that side of his divine-human personality it might well afford to put an emphasis upon his humanity, at a point not now stressed—the social, the personal, and the ethical side of his humanity. As it is, the physical and the metaphysical bearings of the incarnation find recognition and expression, but not the social and personal; the divine-human and the physical-human are both stated, but not the ethical-human. "Christ is so human and so like us," said one, "that I am constrained to hope and encouraged to believe that I may be like him, and am resolved to try to be like him." This method of viewing Christ's humanity gives a new significance to the doctrine of the incarnation. Any tendency to emphasize his humanity in order to minify his deity should be resisted; but an emphasis placed upon his humanity that will result in encouraging men to try to be like him is to be welcomed.

**The Brother-
hood of Man.**

A true doctrine of the brotherhood of man as well as the Fatherhood of God finds not only its foundation and inspiration, but its noblest exemplification, in the incarnate Son of God; and it is possible that an Article setting forth the nature and work of Christ could be so worded as to give happy expression to this doctrine which seems at this time to call for special recognition and emphasis.

**The Atone-
ment an Ex-
pression of
Divine
Love and
Wisdom.**

Consider, again, the statement of the doctrine of atonement that is found in these Articles: "Christ truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and

* "The Son, who is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man." This is the first part of the second Article.

to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men." Now I do not say that this is Calvinism, but I do say that it approaches the subject of atonement from the point of view of Calvinism rather than that of evangelical Arminianism, and is inadequate and unsatisfactory as a definition of the Methodist doctrine of atonement. Calvinism makes the will of God sovereign over his love. Arminianism believes in the sovereignty of divine love among the attributes of God to the extent that it makes the will of God the expression of the nature and character of One who is a Father and whose crowning attribute is love. The necessity of atonement is found in the justice of God, the origin of atonement in the love of God, and the method of atonement in the wisdom of God. The statement of the doctrine of the atonement that emanated from the Calvinistic school of theological thought selected that first one single element—that the atonement is born in and necessitated by the justice of God—and its whole doctrine of the atonement was built on that idea and what logically came from it. Now evangelical Wesleyan Arminianism has come in and said that it is not enough to say that it is the justice of God that necessitates atonement. It has come in to say that back of or along with the assertion of the justice of God we must say that the love of God is the origin of the atonement and the wisdom of God is that which determines the method of atonement. And what evangelical Methodism wants is such a statement of its doctrine of atonement as shall not only assert the necessity of atonement in the justice of God, but also the origin and method of atonement in the love and wisdom of God. The grandest expression of love for a sinful world that a Father can make is to give his Son for their salvation; the grandest expression of love that a Son can make is to give himself in voluntary self-sacrifice for the world's redemption. These are the potent and precious truths about the atonement that are everywhere emphasized in the New Testament, and we want a statement of the doctrine of atonement which, while neglecting no truth, will keep the emphasis where the New Testament places it.

The Necessity,
Origin, and
Method of
Atonement.

**Office and
Work of
the Holy
Spirit.**

Take again Article IV. on the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God." This is very good as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough; and it leaves out the very aspects of the office and work of the Holy Spirit which need most to be emphasized in this our day. I can but think that Wesleyan Methodists whose experience and history have reproduced so much of the work and gospel of the Holy Spirit that is recorded in the book of Acts will write, if they have a chance, a richer and fuller statement of their faith in the Holy Spirit than this is.

**The Holy
Scriptures.**

The fifth Article on the Holy Scriptures reads as follows: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." This Article (only part of which is here quoted), while stating what all Protestants believe, is, as to its form and emphasis, inadequate. An Article on the Holy Scriptures written for our day, while containing all the truth that is here affirmatively stated, will, we venture to suggest, place the emphasis at a different point. It will connect the divine-human Book more closely and vitally with the Divine-human Person of Christianity, and will find some way to declare that the highest value and authority of the Bible grow out of what it says of Christ and what he says of it, and still more out of what he says in it and through it. The new statement will find, not the only claim, but the supreme claim which the Bible has to being recognized as divinely inspired in its exalted ethical teachings and influence. And this new statement of faith in the divine-human Book will, we again venture to suggest, while declaring the Bible to be infallible and of divine authority in the realm of moral and spiritual truth, yet leave devout scholarship untrammelled in its investigations, and unembarrassed in announcing any conclusions that may be justified by

**Where the
Emphasis
Should be
Placed in
Defining
Biblical
Inspiration.**

reason and supported by trustworthy evidence. It will probably disappoint some in having absolutely nothing to say, one way or another, concerning "higher criticism"; but it will make glad the heart of every devout biblical student who believes that the Bible was divinely inspired, not to teach science or history or chronology, but to reveal the nature and will of God and to give moral guidance and help in getting rid of sin, in being holy and useful, in learning the mind and heart of Christ, in carrying the gospel to those who have it not.

But the Twenty-five Articles of Religion never were recognized as a complete and adequate statement of our doctrines. The fact that it has always been found necessary to add to the mention of these Articles in our Discipline other "standards" is proof that in themselves alone they were always regarded as incomplete and inadequate. To say that they are inadequate is not to say that they are untrue, or to imply that we do not still believe them. Methodists believe them now, believe all of them, and have always believed them. The existence of other recognized doctrinal "standards" in the past has not worked to the discredit of these Articles, and need not in the future. The new statement of faith and doctrine that is proposed is not meant to be contrary to either our present "existing and established standards" or the Twenty-five Articles, but, on the contrary, to be in perfect doctrinal accord with them—a complete expression of that which is taught in all of them.

We are forbidden by our restrictive rules from establishing "any new standards or rules of doctrine *contrary to our present existing and established standards*," and yet, strangely enough, there is not now and has never been any agreement among our representative men as to exactly what these "standards" are. One man thinks they refer to the Twenty-five Articles; another thinks John Wesley's Fifty-two Sermons and Notes on the New Testament are what is meant; a third thinks all of these and the Apostles' Creed are referred to; a fourth thinks they are certain doctrinal tracts well known and much appealed to in the early days of Methodism; yet another thinks the Hymn Book was meant to be included; another has ventured to

The Articles
Always Re-
garded as
Inadequate

Ambiguity
as to Our
"Standards
of Doctrine."

Bishop McTyeire. suggest that Watson's "Institutes" should be included in the enumeration of our "existing and established standards of doctrine," forgetting perhaps that this latter phrase was placed in our Discipline many years before Watson's "Institutes" were written; and yet another suggests that the General Conference of 1808, which introduced this term, did not itself have any clear-cut and well-defined meaning in using the phrase "standards of doctrine," but used the phrase only in a general way as referring to what was commonly understood to be the doctrinal standards of the Church. Bishop McTyeire defined these "standards" in one way in the first edition of his "Manual of the Discipline" and in a later edition defined them differently. Bishop Tigert's "Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism" has so far followed the example of Bishop McTyeire as to define these "standards" somewhat differently in successive editions of his book. Others have declared that after studying the subject for years they find themselves unable to determine definitely what is meant by the phrase "the existing and established standards of doctrine" referred to in our Discipline, and do not think that any definition of the phrase ever yet suggested can claim to be authoritative. The ambiguity attending the interpretation of this phrase in the Discipline is surely a strong argument in favor of Methodism having some complete statement of doctrine which shall also be so far a "standard of doctrine" that all can appeal to it with confidence as an expression of the common faith of world-wide Methodism.⁵

An Anomaly.

If it were true, as some claim, that while there is a constitutional method of changing everything else in our Church, there is no constitutional method provided for changing our Twenty-five Articles and doctrinal "standards," it would certainly be an anomaly that the one and only absolutely unalterable feature of the Meth-

⁵The Wesleyan Church of England defines its doctrinal "standards" as the Fifty-three Sermons and the Expository Notes of John Wesley. The Canadian Methodist Church has defined its doctrinal "standards" as embracing both the Twenty-five Articles and the Sermons and Notes of Wesley. Neither the Methodist Episcopal Church nor the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has ever officially decided what is meant by the term "existing standards of doctrine" as used in the Discipline.

odism of the twentieth century should be certain Articles of Religion written by Archbishop Cranmer three hundred and fifty years ago, and two hundred years before Methodism was born, and certain "standards" the meaning of which no man has ever yet been able to explain and no College of Bishops or General Conference has ever yet undertaken officially and authoritative-ly to define! It will be remembered that this statement with reference to the doctrinal "standards" was introduced into the Discipline by the General Conference of 1808 which had in it only one hundred and twenty-nine members and was not then a del-egated body, being composed of all the itinerant preachers who had traveled for four years. It was the General Conference of 1832 that introduced the restrictive clause excepting the Twenty-five Articles and doctrinal "standards" from any specified mode of alteration. It is possible, as many think, that the idea in the mind of the Conference of 1832 in taking this action was that the articles and standards should be made unalterable. But, be this as it may, the late General Conference of the Methodist Epis-copal Church, South, showed by action taken with reference to changing one of the Articles for use in foreign fields, that it did not so interpret the restrictive rules. The Conference went even further and pointed out how legislation affecting the first restrictive rule, and altering the Twenty-five Articles or other doctrinal standards, is to proceed, viz., it "may be altered, upon the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences, by a ma-jority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding." (See Discipline of 1906, paragraph 43.)

If the time ever comes when a Church holds on to a creed be-cause its constitution and restrictive rules make it impossible to change it, rather than because it is a true expression of its present living and abiding faith, then it is no longer an expres-sion of *faith*, even though it be called such,—it becomes then an impediment to progress, a source of death and not of life. A creed that is really believed does not need to be preserved by a law forbidding the Church to alter it; and a creed which a Church would change if it could, but does not change simply be-cause it cannot do so constitutionally, is no creed at all, and could

How the First
Restrictive
Rule Can be
Changed.

When Creeds
Should be
Changed.

have no moral value in the life of a Church. Fortunately for us, modern Methodism does not desire to change its faith or its creed; it simply desires a doctrinal statement that shall adequately and worthily state its faith.

Why Have
Church
Creeds
Fallen Into
Disrepute?

A Christian creed ought to be a real and living force in saving sinners, in educating and building up believers, and in evangelizing the world. The Church creeds, however (excepting the simple and universal Apostles' Creed), have fallen into disrepute not only with men of the world but to some extent with members of the Church. The popular conception of a Church creed is that it is a series of theological statements that are dry and cold and hard, something scholastic and skeletal, antiquated and obsolete, uninteresting, lifeless, incapable of stirring the mind to think great and holy thoughts or the heart to aspire after that which is lofty and divine. Is this not true? And is not Methodism first of all and best of all able to redeem the name of creed from such undeserved disrepute, by making such a statement of Christian faith as shall be warm with new life and glow with the conscious intelligence of a living friend that is recognized, known, and loved? These old and venerated creeds that now seem so dead were once an expression of the living thought of believers and filled a large place in the conscious life of the Church. But they have little to do with the conscious thought and life of the Church to-day. The time is coming, however, if it be not already here, when a new expression of the faith, experience, purpose, and life of the Church will come into existence; and when it does, it will be something that is alive, a real help in guiding sinners to Christ, in educating the young, and in saving the world.

Two Types
of Oppo-
nents.

The proposition looking to a new statement of our faith has met with opposition from two entirely different types of opponents—(1) those who attach great value to creeds and believe the Twenty-five Articles are an entirely adequate and satisfactory expression of Methodist faith, and are therefore in sympathy with the effort of our fathers to make them unalterable and binding upon the Church for all time to come; and (2) those who do not believe in creeds and would prefer none at all, but feel glad, if we are to have any Articles of Religion, that they

are so few in number and so liberal in character as to create no embarrassment and place no fetters upon liberty of thought. The first class of opponents should not feel disturbed over the action taken by the General Conference, seeing that what is proposed is not to change in any way the faith or the doctrines which have characterized the Church from the beginning, but only to give such an expression to that common faith as may be acceptable to all Methodists. The second class of opponents need to be reminded that the old idea of a creed, as something to bind men's faith and furnish a test by which heresy can be determined and condemned, is largely a thing of the past. The new creed is positive, not negative; something to help, not to hinder; to free, not to bind; inclusive, not exclusive; educational and progressive, not holding down and back; evangelistic, and not scholastic; irenic, and not polemic. The Church needs a statement of faith that it can take to thinking and truth-seeking men and say, not "Here is something you shall believe," but rather "Here is something so reasonable and scriptural and true that if you will only read and examine it you will believe it." If any type of Christian faith in the world can hope to make such a statement of doctrine as will commend itself to all men, surely evangelical Arminianism and world-wide Methodism can.

Neither the Wesleyan Methodist Church of England nor either branch of American Episcopal Methodism nor any other branch of world-wide Methodism will have to change in the slightest degree its present restrictive rules concerning doctrinal standards, should this movement result in securing such a statement of our faith as that which is proposed. It can have only such value as may be given to it by each Church. If it should simply be approved by the various Churches and ordered published like the Hymnal and the Catechism, to be used by all who may desire, and possessed of value as something that can be referred to as expressive of the consensus of Methodist faith on the great cardinal doctrines and essential truths of Christianity, this would probably be all the legislation that it would need. It is to be hoped that it will not in any case be used to put restraints upon that liberty of private faith and that freedom of public utterance which have

The New Idea
versus the
Old Idea of a
Creed.

What Author-
ity Would
the Proposed
Statement
Have?

characterized Methodists from the beginning, and which liberty is more appreciated now than ever before in our history.

Creeds and confessions and statements of faith are not prepared primarily for mature and old men who have reached a point after long years of thought and investigation where they not only feel no need for such helps, but prefer not to have anything of the kind imposed upon them. Statements of doctrine are made for young converts and young ministers who need help and guidance in their thinking during their early years and during the formative period of their intellectual and moral life. Mature pastors, who may have studied their own creed out and may feel for themselves no need of credal statements, will generally find such statements of great value in the training of their converts and members who desire to be, or should desire to be, intelligent and well-informed Methodists. If the Articles of Religion are not helpful for this purpose, then they are not all that we could desire. A creed serves as a pilot and helps the young sailor on the sea of religious and theological thought to steer clear of the breakers until he has gotten his bark safely out into the open sea where as an older, maturer, and wiser man he can be safely trusted to do his own thinking and his own steering. This, however, does not mean that he will then cease to believe the creed that he has been taught. If it is what it ought to be, and he is what he ought to be, he will now believe it not because his Church teaches it, but because he finds it to be scriptural and true. But it is students of theology and thoughtful young ministers and laymen and converts in the mission fields who most need, and are most helped by, statements of Christian faith such as that which has been proposed. They are not meant to hinder and bind men in their thinking, but to help them and free them—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." I am persuaded that some of the older ministers who say they have never gotten any help from creeds and confessions and Articles of Religion, in their preparation for the pulpit and in their understanding of the religion of the New Testament, would have a higher appreciation of the value of such things if

they had had from the beginning of their ministry such a statement of our faith as is now proposed.

That Church creeds must be used at times and under certain conditions to settle questions of heresy, and to silence disseminators of dangerous and hurtful error, is not to be denied. The Church owes it to itself and to the world to promulgate truth and not error, and to see that no man shall go abroad under its commission and authority teaching pernicious doctrines to the subversion of the faith and moral life of the people. The Church stands for something definite, and must have courage, whenever occasion demands it, to protect itself and its faith against those who would destroy it. But, nevertheless, a creed in this our day is not meant to be a torch with which a bigot goes forth to hunt for heretics that he may burn them, but it is rather a lamp with which an earnest believer goes forth to seek for those who are lost in the darkness of sin that he may guide them by its friendly light to Him who is the Saviour of sinners and the Light of life.

Methodism has never been much troubled with heresy. While there have been among us some who have felt called upon to act as the guardians of our orthodoxy and have shown more zeal than discretion in hunting for heretics, it is not with a view to increasing or encouraging this class of churchmen that it is proposed now to have a clearer and more definite statement of our faith. If this should be the result of the proposed statement of faith, it would be a backward movement and not, as its friends and advocates all believe it to be, a forward movement. There are some Methodist divines who take the position that the reason why we as a Church have allowed so much liberty of belief and utterance to individuals, and have been so exempt from heretics and heresy trials, is due to the fact that we have had no creed or confession that has undertaken to define our faith with precision and definiteness; and this freedom from specific and definite statements in the doctrinal platform of Methodism has been, as they regard it, a positive advantage to us. They prefer, therefore, to leave it to each individual to state his own faith, and prefer having nothing more definite than that we now have. One of the most distinguished of American Methodist divines, in giving

Use of Creeds
to Settle
Heresy.

Methodism's
Freedom
from
Heresy.

Is This the
Explan-
ation?

expression to this view, says: "It is better to have an obsolete creed than it is to run the danger of overstrict dogmatic definition, which may prove a bondage to the traditional freedom of Methodists. I fear very much the effect of trying to imprison the growing and changing thought of to-day in set phrase and formula. It would give the heresy-hunters a terrific advantage in calling to book those in our Church who prefer to hold the truth in a large way and to give their brethren the same liberty, as long as they keep within the general boundaries of evangelic faith." The implication here is that our Articles of Religion are obsolete. But for any one to defend the continued use of a creed which is declared by him to be obsolete, and to justify its retention in the constitution of the Church, although conceded to be out of date and without force, simply through fear that an up-to-date and living creed would be overstrict and would curtail private liberty, is a position open, as we think, to very serious objection. If a creed is really obsolete and out of date, it ought to be either revised or reënforced by an up-to-date supplement, or abolished and replaced by a new creed. A Church cannot afford to retain and publish to the world as its standard of faith and doctrine a creed that is known to be obsolete. The published creed of a Church is what the world is going to judge it by, and rightly so; and no Church can hold on to a creed that does not express its real belief without a distinct loss of moral influence in the world.

Heresies Most
Frequent
where
Statements
of Doctrine
are Most
Meager.

But it can be most convincingly shown that definiteness of statement does not in itself lead to heresy or heresy trials, nor does indefiniteness of statement or even absolute silence result in freedom from heresy and heresy trials. There are, for example, few things about which our Articles have so little to say as concerning the future life, probation after death, etc. It is only by inference and implication that a definite doctrine can be deduced from them. And yet it is just here in this realm where the Articles are most silent, and where most liberty, it might be inferred, would be allowed, that the largest number of charges and trials and expulsions for heresy have occurred in our own and other branches of Methodism. If a statement of doctrine is

what it ought to be, it will not make heretics—it will prevent heresy.

Those who have spoken and written in favor of this proposed new fuller and more modern statement of our faith have all expressed their faith in the Twenty-five Articles and their appreciation of the service they have rendered in the past and may yet render in the future.* The only argument that has been advanced in downright criticism and repudiation of the Twenty-five Articles has come from those who in opposing the new statement have argued that all definitions and statements of faith, made by the Church, are limitations imposed upon individual believers, and are as such not only an improper interference with the rights of private opinion but calculated to produce needless and hurtful heresy trials. Now it is easy to see that this argument, if it has any weight at all, is equally valid against any and all statements and definitions of faith such as we now have

An Argument
Against All
Creeds and
Articles of
Religion.

*The following statement is found in the stenographic report of the writer's speech before the General Conference which was thoroughly extemporeaneous so far as form and expressions used are concerned: "But let me say that this resolution calls for no conflict with our restrictive rules. We would not alter in any degree these Twenty-five Articles. We would leave them just as they are and just where they are, to serve the intellectual and spiritual needs of any who may continue to get help and inspiration from them. Nevertheless, I for one believe that they have served their purpose by the will of God and are now entitled to honorable superannuation. I believe that they should take their honored and their permanent place in our history of Christian doctrine, not as Articles that we have repudiated or do not still believe, but simply as Articles that met our needs one hundred and twenty-two years ago, but are not now altogether adequate and sufficient for our wants." The word "superannuation" as here used gave offense to some who placed an interpretation upon it involving something of stigma and dishonor, an idea which was utterly foreign to the mind of this writer, who learned the meaning of the word in a Methodist parsonage where a superannuated preacher was defined as one who, after years of faithful service, is retired from the more active responsibilities and burdens of the ministry that these labors and burdens may be placed upon other and younger shoulders. The use of any term by a speaker which is misunderstood and gives offense is unfortunate and to be regretted; nevertheless we can but feel that the number is small who will fail to acknowledge that there are some striking points of analogy between the two things here compared.

in our present Articles of Religion and in our approved catechism; and it involves the further implication that all charges and trials for heresy, no matter how serious the offense may be, are an improper interference with personal liberty. This position can be shown to be utterly untenable. To defend the statements of doctrine that we now have in our Articles of Religion, and yet to object to further, fuller, and better statements, is thoroughly inconsistent. How can it be desirable and right and compatible with liberty to declare that God is "without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness," and yet a source of bondage to declare that "God the eternal Spirit is a Father of infinite holiness, compassion, and love"? As the moonlight is to the sunlight, so is the mere goodness of God to the holiness and love of the Father. If I can have liberty while walking in the moonlight of his goodness, surely I shall not have less of liberty while walking in the sunlight of a creed that declares not only his goodness but his Fatherhood, his holiness, and his love. If I can have liberty with a creed that declares that Christ died "to reconcile his Father to us," surely I shall not have less liberty of utterance as an ambassador of Christ if my creed shall also state the other more precious, important, and welcome truth that my God is reconciled, and is in Christ reconciling the world of sinners unto himself. On the other hand, while I am myself in favor of large liberty of opinion in all matters of faith and doctrine, yet to say that we are to set no limitations whatever to erroneous and hurtful teachings in our pulpits is, I confess, a more liberal position than I think any Church can afford to take. But I repeat and insist that statements of doctrine that are true and faithful interpretations of Scripture will commend themselves to reason, and will thus not only not increase heresy but, by saving men from confusion and error, will tend to prevent truth-seeking but perplexed souls from heresies which in the absence of such helpful statements would be more or less frequent.

The Difference
Between
Rules that
Bind and
Rules that
Govern.

There are rules that bind but do not govern; and there are other rules that govern but do not bind. The former are imposed *ab extra* by authority, and unless maintained by external authority they will cease to be followed. The latter are ad-

dressed to the reason and are imposed by moral free agents upon themselves; their authority comes *ab intra* and ceases only when they cease to command approval and faith. Articles of faith and statements of doctrine belong properly to that class of rules which seek to govern rather than to bind, and whose authority is derived from the force with which they appeal to the reason and command the faith of believers. The day in which we live is characterized by marked and outspoken impatience of anything imposed by ecclesiastical authority and designed to bind men, but it is generously open to whatever seeks to govern by an appeal to reason and by the inherent authority of that which can approve itself as being righteous and true. The bondage which truth imposes is consistent with perfect moral freedom. A Church should not seek to bind men's faith by imposing on them a creed which they accept only because the Church teaches it, but it should seek to guide and govern men by giving them a statement of faith and duty which they will freely accept because they believe it to be true.

An individual does not have to let his faith go unstated in order to be liberal and broad-minded and permit others to differ with him. No man was more definite and positive in the statement of what he believed than John Wesley, and yet it would be hard to find a Christian man in any age more liberal, broad-minded, and charitable than he was. So the faith of Methodism does not have to remain either unstated or stated in only general and partial outlines in order to be liberal. The liberality of Methodism is of the positive kind; it grows out of that breadth of belief and Christian charity that find their explanation and inspiration in the nature of our faith and in the spirit of liberality that marks our theology and our intercourse with all Christian denominations. Is anything more certain about Methodism than that it stands for something definite in faith and doctrine, and that its faith is large and liberal? If this be true, then let us not fear to state as clearly as we can what those things are that are commonly believed among us. Let us not be afraid that we will restrict each other's liberties and bring each other into bondage and imprison each other in dogmatic chains too grievous to be borne, if

The Liberality
of Methodist
Faith.

we set forth in a comprehensive statement the great moral and spiritual truths which are believed and emphasized in our faith and preaching. A large proportion of those who have opposed the new statement of faith proposed have done so because of the fear expressed above—that it will intrench upon that freedom of belief and speech which has characterizd our Church from its beginning. All of those who have spoken or written in favor of the proposed statement of faith are, so far as this writer is aware, in full sympathy with every plea that has been made for continued liberty of opinion. It is not easy to see, in view of these facts, how it is possible for a narrow and hampering creed to result from what has been proposed. Unless it can win its way to the hearts of the Methodists of the world and commend itself to every man's conscience by the merit of truth, let not ecclesiastical authority impose it on any one. Surely it has not occurred to any one to make acceptance of the proposed statement of faith a condition of membership in the Church. And if a later generation of Methodists shall find that it is no longer adequate and satisfactory as an expression of their faith, it is to be hoped that they will be permitted to change it whenever they desire, unhampered by any restrictive rule other than their love of truth and their honest and earnest desire to have their formal creed correspond with their real faith.

Creed Revisers are Not Creed Destroyers but Creed Savers.

To say that we are revising our creed does not describe our case. But those who have creeds that need to be revised deserve praise and not blame for the work they are trying to do. To doubt at the right place and at the right time is the best cure for doubt, and to dogmatize at the wrong place and in the wrong manner is the surest road to rational rebellion and religious skepticism. Creed revisers are not creed destroyers; they are creed savers. They who wisely and reverently criticise a creed written centuries ago and indicate, in a spirit of loving loyalty to the truth, how it may be either revised or supplemented or restated to adapt it to new conditions, to the honest thought and growing spiritual life of a new century, are not enemies who are destroying that creed, but they are friends who are saving it. The man who first criticised the traditional interpretations of the

Mosaic account of creation as siy literal days, and argued that the days must refer to periods or geologic ages, was accused of trying to destroy faith in the Bible; but it turned out that he was not destroying faith in the Bible, but saving it. Reinterpretations of the Bible may modify and destroy old interpretations, but they do not destroy faith in the Bible itself, or in the great cardinal doctrines of Christianity,—they save and enrich and strengthen faith in that which liveth and abideth forever.

But, some one objects, the tendency of this enlightened age is toward liberty of religious thought, toward the rejection of creeds, not toward subscription to them. We answer, no—there is no tendency on the part of evangelical Christians toward the rejection of creeds, but there has been for many years past a growing discontent with creeds written three hundred years ago. They do not meet the wants of our times. Only *inspired* Scripture can remain the same for all time. Uninspired creeds and Confessions the Church needs, but they should be changed, recast, or written anew ever and anon to meet the wants of the times. The Nicene Creed might do very well for the Nicene and post-Nicene age, but it was not enough for the age of Luther and Calvin, of Cranmer and the Westminster divines; nor were their creeds, unchanged, suited to the age of Mr. Wesley, and much less are they suited to our age. The great majority of believers in all the Churches are feeling the need of new statements of Christian doctrine more expressive of and contributory to the intellectual and spiritual life of our day. This does not mean that we are rejecting or repudiating the old; all that is in the old which is both true and important enough to call for preservation will be restated and incorporated into the new. That the evangelical Christian Churches will abolish all creeds, all authoritative expressions of faith, is a thing not to be thought of. If there is any need for creeds, confessions of faith, at all, there is certainly a necessity either for their revision from time to time or for a new statement of the old faith at least every two or three centuries, if not oftener. Some seem to talk as if they thought to change the creed was scarcely less than to tamper with the inspired word of God. This must not be carried to

The Church
Will Always
Need "State-
ments of
Faith."

the point of superstition. We must not accredit to any uninspired and merely human documents a sanctity and a veneration that belong only to the inspired word of God. We believe that the creed of a Church should be reverenced, should not be often or easily changed, and should be protected by proper safeguards. But it is certainly to the interest of Christianity that its doctrines should be restated from time to time.

Bishops Wilson, Galloway, and Others Alter the Articles for Use in Japan.

A Commission was recently appointed to represent our Church, in coöperation with a similar Commission representing the Methodist Episcopal Church, in formulating plans for the union of the different Methodist Churches of Japan. This Commission was composed of Bishops A. W. Wilson and C. B. Galloway, Drs. James Atkins and W. R. Lambuth, and Mr. T. T. Fishburne, from our Church. The Commission had under consideration, along with other matters, the question of adapting the Twenty-five Articles to the needs of Japan. It was referred to a committee taken from both Churches, of which Bishop A. W. Wilson was chairman, and that committee reported in favor of omitting several of the anti-Romish Articles named above, thus reducing the number of Articles to eighteen. The Article on the Church was added to. The report of this committee was accepted and endorsed by the entire Commission with remarkable unanimity. There is every reason to believe that the Commission acted with great discretion and wisdom in thus suggesting to the new united Methodist Episcopal Church of Japan that the Articles of Religion should be thus altered.

John Wesley's Example Worthy of Our imitation.

We believe that if the reconstructive, organizing, and truth-loving mind of John Wesley could have been present in the flesh, personally guiding our Methodism for the past hundred years, long ago would our Twenty-five Articles have been recognized by him as inadequate to our wants as a great Church, and the doctrinal system contained in our numerous and excellent "standards" would have been formulated into an evangelical Confession of Faith such as would be thoroughly suited to the aggressive age in which we live and the conditions of religious thought that now surround us. Gifted in a rare degree with reverence and courage, he combined with his veneration for

the past and for the authority of the Church a desire to adapt all that was true and good in the past to the needs of the day in which he lived. His example is worthy of imitation by us who are called on to meet the religious needs of our day. Nothing written by a Methodist theologian in recent times is more expressive of the attitude of the Church of to-day toward the creeds and symbols of other days long past than the address of Dr. (now Bishop) E. E. Hoss before the Ecumenical Methodist Conference of 1901, where he spoke as an honored representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to the representatives of worldwide Methodism. Among the notable utterances in that address are the following:

The Church in every age is bound by all considerations to do its own thinking. To go on indefinitely accepting and repeating the formulæ of the fathers, as if they possessed some magical virtue, and were too sacred to be touched and modified in any way, is to commit an act of supreme folly. Everybody who has an outlook upon the course of history is aware of that inevitable process by which words that originally incarnated and represented a living truth have a natural tendency to harden and crystallize into the expression of a dead dogma. I have sometimes thought that if Mr. Wesley could only know the extent to which many of his followers have fallen into the habit of repeating the *ipsissima verba* of his teachings, as if they were a final and conclusive statement of the truth, he would turn over in his grave and groan; for he himself, far from being the slave of traditions, was the freest and boldest mind of his generation. He made diligent use of all material, from every source; but he called no man master, and played the parrot to no school of critics or theologians. Holding fast the form of sound words does not mean the abdication of one's personal right to consider, to weigh, to sift, to reconstruct, or to reject. The ultimate problems of religion are eternal. They are always emerging with fresh aspects, and calling for a new hearing.

Is it too harsh a judgment to affirm that the greatest enemies of a conservative orthodoxy are those belated dogmatists who still cling with devout stupidity to the very letter of the creeds and symbols of other days? The Methodist who insists on measuring everything in heaven and earth by Watson's Institutes or Wesley's Sermons is a pestilent breeder of heresy. What shall I say then of that one who, (with the Commentaries of Meyer, Godet, Lightfoot, Ellicott, and Westcott, and the noble volumes of our own Joseph Agar Beet) in his hands or in his sight, still stoutly affirms that the dictum of Adam Clarke is the end of the law on a matter of exposition? We are living in the twentieth century, and unless we wish to incur the just suspicion of idiocy, we must gather and use all that is offered to us by the master workmen, who are toiling with such infinite diligence in this end of the ages to find out whatever may be discovered concerning the mind and purpose of God toward our lost world.

Strong Utterances by Bishop Hoss.

Who are the Enemies of Orthodoxy?

**The Growing
Influence of
Evolution
and Histor-
ical Criti-
cism.**

What I have said might be said with a considerable measure of pertinacity at any time or in any place, but at this time and in this place it deserves to receive a special emphasis. Two great movements, more or less related to each other, are passing over the world. The doctrine of evolution, which, in spite of the materialistic and atheistic forms that it sometimes assumes, undoubtedly contains large elements of truth, is gaining an even wider acceptance; and the science of historical criticism, which is a science in spite of the arrogant and ignorant skepticism with which it is often propounded, is likewise commanding the attention and respect of scholars everywhere. These facts render it imperative that those who would speak to their fellow-men in intelligible and understandable terms must discard much of the terminology with which they have long been familiar and clothe their message, if not in a new, at least in an altered dress. While we cannot too earnestly insist upon the propriety of teaching the gospel in terms of the gospel, we shall be wise if we likewise remember that we must teach it in terms that come home to the business and the bosoms of the struggling, suffering, and sinning men and women who are thronging about us on every hand and crying out, although not always in articulate tones, for guidance and help. Let there be no craven fear that in following this course we shall get away from the New Testament or forfeit anything of the great inheritance which has been brought down to us from distant years.

**The Courage
of a Living
Faith.**

I confess to a deep personal regret that, owing partly to the circumstances that I have already mentioned, and partly to a right and jealous regard for the honor of long-established and well-accredited truths, our Methodist ministers have not had a full share in the critical and theological discussions of recent times. I sincerely trust that in the future we shall show ourselves as worthy and as competent to be heard in these fields as we have been in other spheres of life and thought. As a matter of course, we dare not forget that evangelism—the direct offer of salvation to the world—is our chief business. Bishop Galloway correctly put the case in the sermon that opened the proceedings of this Conference: "Our gospel is a proclamation and not a discussion, a verity and not a speculation." That high and pregnant sentiment doubtless finds an echo in all our hearts, but the fact remains that the intellect has its right in religion, and that a living faith will always be courageous enough to confront without flinching every issue that may be raised and to probe to the core and center every distressing and paralyzing doubt that may be thrust upon its notice. If our brightest young men show an inclination to explore untried territory, let us not warn them off with an ominous shake of the head and an intimation that they are treading on dangerous ground, but rather let us bid them Godspeed in their glorious adventure.

**A Reinterpre-
tation of
Christ and
the Bible.**

A restatement of an old faith tends to give it new power and to awaken new interest. Old creeds lose their power to awaken interest when, either in language or in forms of thought, they come to be in any degree antiquated. Any reverence for creeds that is carried to the point of making it impossible to change

them is not only unwise and detrimental to the best life of the Church, but it may be positively unchristian in that it gives to uninspired writings a fixedness and authority that belong only to the inspired Scriptures. There are two things that will never become antiquated or out of date: they are the Bible, the inspired Word of God, and Jesus Christ, the personal and living Word. But they need to be reinterpreted ever and anon, and the truths which they have brought to the world need to be restated from time to time in the light of new experience and new life. Wesley may recede into the past, but Jesus Christ will never become an ancient. Our Articles of Religion may have to recede sooner or later and take their place in the history of Christian doctrine, but God's own inspired Word will never have to recede and be superseded and take its place in history as a thing of the past. But it is the duty of the Church of God to reinterpret this ever-living Book in its moral and spiritual teachings, and reinterpret the ever-living Christ in the ever-increasing significance of his Divine-human Personality, whenever this may be called for by new conditions and the larger life of the Church. Every new creed or statement of Christian faith that is worthy to command the attention and thought of the world is in some true sense a reinterpretation of Christ and the Bible in terms suited to the intellectual and spiritual conditions that call it forth.

Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) says that one of the greatest needs of the modern Church is an ethical creed. A new emphasis is certainly being placed in our day upon ethics, and the credal statements made to meet the needs of the Church now should recognize this fact and give an important place to a few timely and well-worded declarations that will serve to show that the Church recognizes its great mission in the world to be to make *men*, to make men by preaching a gospel that will regulate conduct, develop moral character, and thus produce noble types of manhood and womanhood. Christ has come into this world and established his Church for the one great purpose of making men. Doctrines and Church creeds and Churches themselves are worth just so much, in the last analysis, as they have power to make a noble type of manhood and womanhood. More and more is the world

The New Em-
phasis upon
Ethics.

in our day applying the test of ethics to individuals and to Churches to determine the real moral value of what they profess to be and believe and do. The only type of Christianity that commands the respect of the world to-day is that which has ethical power to regulate the moral conduct, to develop moral character, to make men be and do that which is right in all the relations of life. We need to declare afresh at this time not only that the Church exists for the purpose of saving sinners and evangelizing the world, but also that saving men and evangelizing the world means getting men ready to live right as well as ready to die well, means getting men not only to join the Church, attend upon its ordinances, and support its institutions, but also to lead virtuous lives, to respect the rights of others, to make money honestly and spend it wisely, to discharge faithfully the duties which they owe as husbands, parents, neighbors, men of business, citizens, rulers. This is at once the supreme work and the crowning glory of the Christian religion. The religion that can make men live thus is the religion that is preparing them in the best possible way for that future and eternal life whose happiness depends upon the deeds done in the body. The time-honored "General Rules" of Methodism have very little to do with the life of the Church of to-day, and no one can read them without feeling that they were written to meet conditions different from those that now exist. But their spirit and purpose—the intense and lofty ethical ideals which they reflect—are still inspiring and guiding the Church, and will find expression in any declaration of its ethical creed which Methodism could make to-day as a part of that larger statement of the faith and ideals of the Church which is now proposed.

**The General
Rules.**


How Shall
Sanctifica-
tion and
Christian
Perfection
be Treated?

But are there not some doctrines, it is asked, upon which it will be absolutely impossible to formulate any statements that will be acceptable to all Methodists—for example, sanctification and Christian perfection? Whose views, it is asked, will be stated? Shall the "second blessing" theory of sanctification, as an instantaneous experience, or the view which defines holiness as the birthright privilege and duty of every believer from the moment of his regeneration, or shall "growth in holiness" be

set forth as the Methodist doctrine? Thus difficulties and embarrassments appear. And shall this doctrine be evaded and avoided for this reason? or shall the fact that it is a difficult doctrine concerning which various and conflicting views are held be a greater reason why it should be considered with courage, discussed with generous frankness, and then clearly stated in those important and essential points about which there is practical and widespread agreement, leaving out points of minor importance? For instance, are not Methodists agreed that we can and should be saved from all sin here in this life, and that it is possible for love so to reign in the heart as to make a life of Christian perfection graciously possible; and that this sinless and perfect life is the privilege and duty of every child of God? Is not this the precious truth upon which we are agreed, and that which we need to emphasize, and may we not recognize that it is a matter of secondary and minor importance whether this sinless life of perfect love be attained instantaneously or progressively?⁷ It seems to me that a declaration could be made by the representatives of world-wide Methodism which, although it might not state all the faith of any Methodist, would yet state the faith of all Methodists in all essential points, and leave every individual just as free as he now is in his faith and preaching. Such an ecumenical statement would be of the greatest possible service in unifying our people as to the important and essential truths involved, and would for the future make absolutely impos-

A Statement
of that upon
which All
are Agreed.

⁷In 1785, a few months after John Wesley abridged and altered the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion for use in America, he wrote as follows concerning entire sanctification: "But it may be inquired, In what manner does God work this entire, this universal change in the soul of the believer? Does he work it gradually, by slow degrees; or instantaneously, in a moment? How many are the disputes upon this head, even among the children of God! And so there will be after all that ever was, or ever can be, said upon it. . . The Scriptures are silent upon the subject, because the point is not determined, at least not in express terms, in any part of the oracles of God. Every man therefore may abound in his own sense, provided he will allow the same liberty to his neighbor, provided he will not be angry at those who differ from his opinion, nor entertain hard thoughts concerning them. Permit me likewise to add one thing more: be the change instantaneous or gradual, see that you never rest until it is wrought in your own soul, if you desire to dwell with God in glory."

sible such painful spectacles and harmful dissensions as have been occasioned by the discussion of this doctrine in the past, sometimes dividing the Church into warring factions and thus exciting the derision of the world. A few wise statements here will do much to unify Methodists the world over.

How Shall
Eschatology
be Treated?

Again, as to the doctrines of the future life, it would be impossible, say some, to formulate any statements that would be acceptable to all Methodists. We are not blind to the difficulty of making satisfactory statements in this department of theology where revelation is so meager and speculation so abundant. Nevertheless, I contend that, difficult and embarrassing as it may be to make a satisfactory statement of Christian faith concerning the future life, Methodist theology owes the world a duty here which it should neither evade nor avoid, but try frankly and wisely to meet by giving forth utterances that will place the emphasis where it needs in our day to be placed and where no other type of theology can so consistently place it as we can. Calvinism has taught that the eternal destiny of every human being in the life to come was decided by the will of God before he was born, and that the elect will glorify God's goodness and grace in their salvation while the damnation of the nonelect will be for the praise and glory of his justice. Over against this, Methodism teaches that it is the will of man in time and not the will of God in eternity that decides who is saved and who lost, and that the happiness of the saved and the misery of the lost hereafter are determined not by election and nonelection in eternity, but by holiness and sin in this state of probation. Heaven is the happiness that results from holiness and that eternally accompanies holiness. Hell is, whatever else it may or may not be, the misery that inevitably follows sin, the torment that must forever accompany guilt; and the reason why God has given it a place in his moral universe is that he may, by its deterring influence upon free agents, reduce sin and misery to the minimum, and so produce the maximum of holiness and happiness. The penal misery of sin is thus seen, if rightly interpreted, to come from the holiness and love of a Father who would save his children to the uttermost of a power limited by their free agency, and not from the hate of an angry God who would punish his enemies to the uttermost of his wrath and of their guilt. It is, therefore, a

part of that large and wise providential government of the universe which has in it, in the aggregate, the least of sin and misery and the utmost of holiness and happiness for free beings. However it may have been in the past or may be in years to come, the degree and duration of future punishment are not the points of eschatology upon which most Christian ministers to-day feel that they should place the emphasis in pleading with sinners to give up their sins. But no one will want any statement of faith made that will embarrass any minister who thinks otherwise or prevent him from declaring and emphasizing what he believes to be a full and ever-needed revelation of the will of God concerning the wrath to come, which every man must flee who desires to be saved from his sins. It is man's free conduct here that will determine his destiny hereafter; and his sin and guilt here will be the full measure of his misery hereafter. These are some of the facts and truths about the future life, as it concerns sinners, upon which I think I can say Methodists are practically agreed the world over, however much they may differ on many other points; and these are points to state which wisely will prove a help and not a hindrance to those who want a faith that they can preach, and which will commend itself to all men, whether saints or sinners, as at once reasonable, just, and consistent with the infinite love of God. To teach a doctrine of hell and its torments which human reason cannot reconcile with the goodness or justice of God is to teach a doctrine which men cannot, in their heart of hearts, believe; and which in the end can but impede the progress of the gospel in its moral power over the consciences and lives of men. It seems to me that the Calvinistic doctrine is open to this most just criticism and objection, and that Methodists can render a real and great service to Christian theology by making a statement of its faith on this subject.

It is because we have a profound reverence for creeds, believe them to be great factors in the growth of Christianity, invaluable aids to the dissemination of the truth and the correction of error, at once expressive of experience and contributory to spiritual life, and mighty forces in the evangelization of the world, that we want a statement of our faith that is suited to this the most aggressive age in the entire history of the Christian Church. However much the creeds of other denominations

Why Methodists are Best Prepared to State the Faith of Twentieth Century Christianity.

may be revised and made to approach that of evangelical Arminianism—and that this is being done more and more we freely grant—it yet seems most fitting that Methodists, who are to the faith and the manner born, should with their own hands undertake to write that creed which can best hope to embody the religious faith of this evangelical and evangelistic age with which the new century is beginning. The free agency and moral accountability of man, the necessity and possibility of the salvation of every human being based on the unlimited atonement of Christ—these are the two doctrines, faith in which has taken possession of the whole Church in this our day, and the preaching of which is carrying the gospel of salvation to every being for whom Christ has died. And while they have now become the property of other Churches, and we greatly rejoice that this is so, yet they belong by priority of faith and preaching to Methodism, and the world has a right to look to Methodists for the best statement of them anywhere to be found. Methodists are best prepared among modern Churches to write a creed wholly evangelical, thoroughly logical and self-consistent, free from all the limitations of Calvinism but omitting nothing vital, a creed at once scriptural enough and broad enough to satisfy the demands of the enlightened Christian conscience of the twentieth century.

The Irenic
Spirit of
Methodism.

The Church creed that shall best reflect the spirit of Christianity in our day, and whose influence will be most largely felt for good, must be irenic and not polemic. While it should be positive and definite, it will also be liberal and generous in its attitude toward all other types of evangelical Christian faith. It will contribute in a real and helpful way toward the spirit of fraternity and Christian unity that is one of the most marked characteristics of modern Christianity. The spirit and genius of Methodism lend themselves genuinely and generously to whatever tends to unite the followers of Christ in any movement or service that seeks to save sinners and to extend the kingdom of our common Lord. A clear and comprehensive statement of the faith, spirit, and purpose of Methodism will not need to name and condemn the errors, be they serious or slight, of other types of faith.

Methodism, in its whole conception of theology, is opposed to Calvinism, and yet there is perhaps no better proof of the irenic spirit of our Church than the fact that Methodists, at least in this part of the world, love Presbyterians, and fellowship and work with them, as with no other branch of the Christian Church. Our dislike of Presbyterian theology—that is, of what has been their theology in the past—is pronounced, but our love of Presbyterian saints is still more pronounced, if indeed it be not perfect.

But, says some one, have we not fought well and won the day for Methodism? Even though slow and late, have we not at length attained recognition and influence, and had we not best “let well enough alone”? Yes, we reply, if the day is done, and we have come to the end of the ages, and our work as a Church is approaching its end. But if the world’s evangelization has just fairly begun, and our hardest and greatest and grandest work as a Church is ahead of us; if the work of saving sinners at home and advancing the kingdom of Christ abroad spreads out before us as a vision large and long, to the ends of the earth and the end of time; if the education and moral culture and spiritual development and training for Christian service of converts and members are the Church’s never-ending work; if for our people to know what they believe and to be able to tell why they believe means strength of character and more joy in life and more power in influencing and serving others for good,—if all or any of these things be true, then let us, with our faces turned toward the future, equip our Church in every possible way for the largest and best service. The statement of faith that we seek is an important part of that equipment. If “Christ for the world” is the first and greatest doctrine of our faith, “the world for Christ,” its logical corollary, becomes our first and greatest duty. Methodism leads the world in the boldness with which it has proclaimed a gospel for all mankind, and it ought to lead the world in the zeal with which it carries the good news to all that sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

Times are now ripe and conditions are now favorable for the preparation of such a statement of our faith as is proposed. Destructive criticism for the past half century has had its day

Methodism's
Work Just
Beginning.

The Times
are Ripe for
the State-
ment Pro-
posed.

and done its work. Its evidence is now in, and its indictment of old views and traditional interpretations has been respectfully listened to. It is now in order for constructive Christian scholarship to begin to do its work; and it has already begun to do it. The Church has grown weary of criticism and critical discussions, and is craving something that is positive and declaratory of faith. It wants scholarship met and answered by scholarship, not by denunciation or dogmatism. But what the Church needs most of all at this time is to have the great cardinal and constructive doctrines of Christianity, the moral and spiritual truths of the Bible, set forth in a statement of Christian faith that shall devote but little of its space and force to anathematizing what we do not believe, but shall affirm clearly, strongly, positively, liberally, what we do believe.

No Just
Grounds for
Fearing the
Result.

All the great creeds of the Church have been produced in periods of intense intellectual and moral activity, when the mind of the world was stirred with the discussion of religious and theological questions of great moment. The religious world may be thus described to-day. Never since the period of the Reformation in the sixteenth century has the mind of the religious and theological world been so stirred as it is at this time; and it is also true, happily, that the heart of the Church is being stirred for the world's evangelization as never before in all history. The mind of the Christian world is at white heat, and it is at such times as these that great expressions of faith may be looked for. If negative and destructive criticism has been at work and helped to bring about conditions of unrest in the religious and theological world, it is also true that devout, believing, and constructive scholarship is also here to build up; and they that be for Christ and the moral and spiritual truth that he represents are greater in number and stronger in power than they that be against him. Movements to state faith and truth never come from doubters and destructive critics, but always from believers and constructive thinkers who have a faith in Christ and his truth which they are ready to declare. Let not one class in our Church and ministry be afraid of another class, in the preparation of this statement of what Methodists believe. Let not the student in sympathy with mod-

Creeds Come
from Be-
lievers, Not
Doubters.

ern scholarship be afraid that conservatism and traditionalism will dominate the Commission and take advantage of its opportunity to send forth a statement that will be repugnant to men whose views of truth are calling for an expression different from what the old theology gave. Let not the conservative who sees nothing but danger and hurtful error in modern biblical criticism be afraid that higher critics and advanced thinkers will get the ear of the Commission and foist upon the Church a statement that will be no expression of the Methodism that he has always known and loved. Such fears and suspicions should have no weight with any man who really believes that Methodism has in its common faith a glorious heritage from the past and a bond of union in the present, which no differences concerning critics and criticism can break. Surely we can trust the men to whom this work shall be committed to give such expression to our common faith as shall be at once faithful to the Methodism that has come down from the fathers and at the same time place no restraints upon those whose faith has made for itself new channels through which it would run out in broad and beneficent streams to bless and enrich other souls.

I do not know anything that can be done that will be so effective in bringing to a speedy end unprofitable and hurtful discussions in the line of destructive higher criticism, and directing public thought to the great saving truths of our holy religion for which the heart of a sinful world is crying, as the preparation and publication of a statement of faith that shall clearly enunciate, duly emphasize, and worthily magnify the great doctrines of salvation that center in and radiate from the person of Christ, and thus call the Church to a fresh realization of its one great mission in the world—to save sinners. “The whole duty of the whole Church is to preach a whole gospel that it may save a whole world.” If such a statement of our doctrinal system can only be made as is worthy of the spiritual life and evangelical faith that have characterized the people called Methodists from the beginning, it cannot fail to intensify the zeal and increase the power of the Church in its evangelistic mission of saving sinners at home and abroad.

The Benefi-
cent Re-
sults that
will Fol-
low.

**Methodism's
Contri-
bu-
tion to the
Theology of
the Chris-
tian World
—A Résumé.**

**Concerning
God and
His Attri-
butes.**

**Concerning
Man and His
Probation.**

**Concerning
Christ and
His Aton-
ement for
Sin.**

Let us now sum up and see at how many points Methodism has enriched theology and in how many ways it has helped to make the Church of to-day evangelical and evangelistic. When Methodism began its work a century and a half ago, it found the Christian world dominated by two powerful religious forces: a powerful theology with its doctrine of salvation by election, and a powerful ecclesiasticism with its doctrine of salvation through the sacraments of the Church. There are six notable particulars in which the theology of Methodism has differed from the theology which it found dominating the Christian Church.

1. It found the popular theology teaching a doctrine concerning God which placed the emphasis upon his sovereignty and justice as manifested in predestination and necessity, and in unconditional election and reprobation; and it proclaimed instead a doctrine of God which places the emphasis upon his Fatherhood and love, which teaches divine foreknowledge and human free agency in the place of predestination and necessity, and makes salvation by grace to be conditioned on repentance and faith.

2. It found theology teaching a doctrine concerning man that made free agency impossible and moral depravity total, and this because the race had stood their probation in Adam, the guilt of whose sin as involved in the fall was imputed to them, and from its awful consequences there was no escape except for those who were in eternity divinely elected to salvation. And Methodism taught instead that man is a moral free agent endowed with gracious ability; that while the race did in some true sense stand a probation in Adam and the consequences of his sin were far-reaching and disastrous, yet the guilt of Adam's sin was not imputed to his descendants, but grace is as "original" as sin is, and under grace every man stands his own probation.

3. It found theology teaching a doctrine of atonement that emphasized Christ's sufferings and death as a punishment for sin, being designed to satisfy the justice and wrath of God in behalf of the elect, for whom alone he died, and whose salvation was secured absolutely by his sacrificial death. And Methodism presented instead a doctrine which emphasized the atonement as an expression of the love of God the Father and the Son for

all mankind, and as designed to make possible the salvation of every sinner, and to secure absolutely the salvation of all such as, in the exercise of their free agency, would repent and believe.

4. It found theology teaching concerning the Holy Spirit and his work in personal salvation: (1) That regeneration is the result of the unconditional and irresistible work of the Holy Spirit upon the elect, or of the sacramental waters of baptism upon the passive recipient; (2) that no regenerate soul can ever so far fall as to forfeit his salvation; (3) nevertheless all men, even elect and regenerate believers, must sin daily in word, thought, and deed as long as they live in the flesh; (4) only a privileged few, "the elect of the elect," can enjoy the witness of the Spirit in the assurance of salvation. Over against this Methodism taught: (1) That regeneration by the Holy Spirit is, like justification, conditioned on repentance and faith and freely offered to all; (2) that every regenerate child of God may fall into sin and forfeit his salvation; (3) nevertheless it is the privilege and duty of every regenerate believer to lead a sinless life of perfect love, and (4) it is also the privilege of all believers to enjoy the assurance of their salvation through the witness of the Spirit all through their Christian life.

5. It found theology teaching a doctrine that made the Church content to do little or nothing to carry the gospel to the heathen world, while a large part of the Church made salvation unduly dependent upon the sacraments, and was reluctant through bigotry to recognize those who differed from them in doctrine and polity as a part of the Church of Christ. Methodism came then and taught the Christian world what it was for a Church to be at once ~~evangelical~~, insisting on faith in Christ as the one thing alone essential to personal salvation; ~~evangelistic~~, full of zeal to save sinners at home and the heathen abroad; and ~~possessed of the spirit of genuine and generous Christian fraterni~~^{ty}, acknowledging all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth as brethren beloved and fellow-laborers in the kingdom of a common Lord.

6. It found theology teaching a doctrine of the future life that made the eternal destiny of every soul in the world to come

Concerning
the Holy
Spirit and
His Work in
Salvation.

Concerning
the Church
and Its
Mission.

Concerning
the Future.

to be determined by his election or nonelection before he was even born, saying that as the salvation of the elect was meant to glorify the love of God so the damnation of the nonelect was meant to be for the praise and glory of his justice. Instead of this, Methodism taught that the destiny of every man in the world to come is determined absolutely by his own free conduct and character in this life, and that whatever misery is declared to await sin in the future life, far from being designed to glorify the justice of God, is, in the divine purpose, meant to deter free agents from sin, and thus finds its explanation in that infinite wisdom and love that is ever working to secure the minimum of sin and misery and the maximum of holiness and happiness both in this world and in the world to come.

These are only a few of the many points in theology where Methodism has a faith to declare. All along the line of Christian doctrine the luminous presence and influence of Methodism can be traced, tending always and everywhere to make God more lovable, man more responsible, the atonement more available, the way of salvation more intelligible, the Church more evangelical, eternal death less incomprehensible, and eternal life more attainable. Do we not owe it to the Church and the world to set forth this faith in such a form that all can read it and in such terms that all can understand it? No matter how successful an individual Methodist might be in setting it forth, his statement of it could hope to be read by only a few thousand people at most in his own branch of the Church, and would even then be received simply as an expression of his own views, and hence would be without authority as an expression of the faith of Methodism. But let world-wide Methodism unite in drawing up such a statement and place upon it the stamp of its ecumenical approval, and it will not only go at once into the hands of fifty thousand itinerant Methodist preachers and give them a greater faith in their faith, but it will go into the homes of many millions of Methodist laymen giving them an intelligent understanding of the doctrines of their Church such as they have never had before. But, beyond this, it will go forth into all the world and be read by multitudes in other Churches, and be welcomed by not a few who,

we may hope, will be guided by its friendly light unto Christ and and into sympathy with evangelical Christianity. Bishop W. F. McDowell, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who has perhaps addressed more large gatherings of college and university students than any Methodist divine in this country, recently remarked that he supposed that during the past twenty years not less than a thousand individual students, interested in religion and desirous of knowing what Methodism believes and teaches, had asked him for some brief and authoritative statement of our faith, and he had to his regret to tell them that there was nothing of the kind in existence to which he could refer them. Shall he and the thousands of other Methodist preachers and teachers who are appealed to for similar information by their members or their pupils or other interested inquirers be compelled always to give the same answer? A large majority of the representative ministers and laymen assembled in the late General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, have indicated how they would have this question answered.

There has rarely if ever been a forward movement proposed in Methodism that has called forth at once from all ranks of our ministry and laity so many able advocates and supporters as this proposition to invite world-wide Methodism to join with us in the preparation of a statement of our common faith. Let us hear what some of these strong men of our Methodism have to say.

Side by side with conservatism [says Bishop E. R. Hendrix] there must be progress. Side by side with men that hold reverently to the past there must be men with their eyes to the future. If that were not the case, we would never have had Paul, we would never have had Luther, we would never have had Wesley. . . . A creed is a fortification, an advance—it marks what we have conquered from the enemy. We are conquering the territory from the enemy, and it becomes us to fortify and hold it as our own. Every creed is defective at one important point, and that is in the definition of the Church. Do you know that the belief in the mission of the Church to save the world does not appear in a single creed of the last century or of the earlier centuries? It is an amazing defect, and that hinders the Church of Christ to-day. I beg you, for the sake of our converts who are being brought to Christ in all parts of the world, let this at least be constituted as a part of our belief, that the Church is not only a company of men where God's word is preached and the sacraments duly administered, but that it

Bishop McDowell.

Widespread Interest in the Proposed Statement.

Bishop Hendrix.

exists for the salvation of the world. I would favor the adoption of this paper if for no other reason than to be the first great Church to put that in its credal statement. . . . The title-page of the Discipline contains the words, "Doctrines and Discipline," which tell of the time from 1788 to 1812, when certain doctrinal tracts were printed *with* the Discipline. On motion of Jesse Lee, in 1812, those were ordered to "be printed and bound in a separate volume." This was not done until twenty years afterwards, under the title of "A Collection of Interesting Tracts Explaining Several Important Points of Scripture Doctrine." It is now proposed to make good the title, "Doctrines and Discipline," by publishing in the Discipline a brief and accurate statement of the doctrines held by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in common with ecumenical Methodism. Our present standards are in several volumes which must be carefully examined to get from them such a statement, and even then it is in fragmentary form and in varied language. We can and should present in compact form what is distinctive in Methodist teaching. The proposed action will meet a genuine need both at home and in the mission fields. Other great Churches are adopting our doctrinal beliefs, and we should increase the number of believers whose "credo" is in terms of doctrinal statement common among Methodists—a theology that can be preached. All that is distinctive in Methodist teaching in the last century and a half deserves clear, compact, and permanent statement.*

**Making Good
the Title-
page of Our
Discipline.**

**Bishop
Tigert.**

There is no doctrinal unrest in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South [says Bishop John J. Tigert]. The Church was never more loyal to the historic platform of Methodism than it is to-day. There is no proposed revision of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion, which will maintain their place in the Discipline as standards of doctrine. We have nothing to take back. The Commission ordered by the General Conference has exclusive reference to the preparation of an ecumenical statement of Methodist doctrine. It will have work to do only when the coöperation of other Methodist Churches in Europe and America, in Asia and Australia, is secured. Methodism is probably the largest Protestant Church on the planet. In the next Ecumenical Methodist Conference, which meets in 1911, it is proposed to test the question whether a general agreement in fundamental Methodist doctrine can be reached and set forth in a common statement. Such a statement, even if it be only declaratory, will have many advantages. Its didactic and educational function is obvious. It will, moreover, be one more vital bond of union for ecumenical Methodism. It is to be hoped that the great Methodist Churches of the world will promptly and heartily respond to this initiative of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

**Dr. Lambuth,
Secretary of
Missions.**

I believe our Articles of Faith should be restated [says Dr. Walter R. Lambuth, Senior Secretary of the Board of Missions] in order to meet the existing needs of the Church at home and abroad. In heathen lands now under readjustment socially and religiously as never before in their history, and face to face as we are in these lands as well as, with changed conditions, in countries where the Romanist faith prevails, we need a positive

*This and several of the following quotations are taken from *Zion's Herald*, of Boston.

deliverance concerning the Christian faith which will be adapted to any and every condition of men in need of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. I most heartily concur in the suggestion made by Bishop Hendrix when he urged that a Church praying and working for the evangelization of the world under the great commission should have as an article of its faith the complete and ultimate triumph of the gospel under the command of the Master, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

A concise statement of the Methodist faith cannot be without value on our foreign fields [says Dr. S. H. Wainright, of Japan]. The need is often felt for something fuller than the Apostles' Creed, on profession of which members are received in the Church; of something more peculiarly Methodistic than the Twenty-five Articles; and of something more condensed and formal than the "Sermons" and "Notes." The statement should be sufficiently short to be printed in the Discipline, and yet sufficiently comprehensive to serve as a basis of teaching and preaching. Such a statement of faith, viewing the great doctrines of Christianity from the standpoint of experience, would give us a better means of contact with the inquiring minds of countries like India and Japan, minds profoundly influenced by modern thought, and would have a wholesome and far-reaching effect in shaping Christian thought now in its early and formative stages in these countries.

Dr. Wainright, of Japan.

What we propose and do sorely need [says Rev. W. N. Ainsworth, of Savannah, Ga., one of our most successful pastors], if my observation among thoughtful inquiring people may be trusted, is a restatement in concise, modern phraseology of the doctrines contained in our Articles, and additionally some statements of equally fundamental and distinguishing doctrines, which Methodism has held from the beginning, but has never formulated in concise statement. A creed is not designed to cover everything that a Church may teach, but certainly it ought to cover the fundamentals of biblical theology as interpreted by that Church. I submit that our present formal statement does not. No human being can read our Articles and get an adequate conception of evangelical Methodist Arminianism. It is all in our standards, but it is not easily accessible to the people. Every religious teacher who has dealt much with stubborn inquirers has felt the need of a simple, concise, and rounded statement. The missionaries, from the venerable Dr. Young J. Allen down, testified to their pressing need of such in heathen lands. . . . As to the question of revision, it is enough to note the laws of language and its growth, to see that language once vital and clear is not always equally perspicuous. The universal Church has through its great councils restated again and again some of our fundamentals and yet steadfastly held to the truth involved. . . . Methodism has a mission to-day more inspiring than ever before. Her mission is in heathen lands as well as at home, and to all classes, including the common people still. The sure way for us to maintain our glory still is to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Tolerate no departure from it. Rather preach it more clearly and emphatically in its application to the age in which we live. With the majority at Birmingham, I believe that nothing short of a new bestowment of the Holy

Dr. Ainsworth, a Pastor.

Ghost will contribute so much to this end as a new statement to be published everywhere—modern, concise, clear, intelligible to everybody.

**Dr. Smith, a
Layman and
Educator.**

The vote of restatement was the expression of the spirit of progress and unity. The suggestion of a short, working creed, accepted by Methodism the world over, was the power of the proposition. Militant Methodism, confident and eager, asks for a battle flag for the twentieth century onset. [So writes Chancellor W. W. Smith, LL.D., of Randolph-Macon.]

**Dr. Cannon,
an Editor.**

Creeds in the past [says Dr. James Cannon, editor of the *Baltimore and Richmond Christian Advocate*] have been the results of the great conflicts of the Church with error, and they are the banners held aloft proclaiming the faith of God's people upon the questions of greatest importance and interest. We are in the midst of a great conflict now. The spirit of negation is in the air. We need a positive statement of our faith concerning the great questions which face us to-day. We want a statement which stresses the love of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, the great mission of the Church to preach the gospel to every creature.

**Dr. Bishop, a
Pastor.**

We may say in all reverence but frankly [says Dr. C. M. Bishop, a pastor in the university city of Missouri] that the Twenty-five Articles, which we have adopted from the past, are not an adequate expression in twentieth century language to twentieth century people of the faith of Methodism. A well-prepared, well-balanced, and sound utterance with reference to our faith will prepare us to go forward into the future. Shall we stand forever with our eyes turned backward only gazing into the past, crying like a seasick child for the shores whence we have sailed? Shall we not rather, in the course of the hurrying years, ourselves turn the prow toward the future and say we do not fear it, and are not afraid to lift up our banners in its face. The broad theology of Methodism fits it in a peculiar sense for the leadership of the Church of God in the years that are upon us and ahead of us as well as the years that are just behind us; and if we make such a declaration of our faith as is proposed and as ecumenical Methodism is thoroughly prepared to make, then we shall indeed lead the hosts of God.

**Purpose of
the Move-
ment.**

The purpose of the movement is, first of all, to unite world-wide Methodism in the fellowship of a common statement of the faith which all Methodists have received from their revered founder. Secondly, to provide an effective means for educating our people in the simple faith and rich heritage of religious truth which are available for us in our early Methodist literature. Thirdly, to procure such a concise and forceful expression of the faith and doctrines of Methodists as will enable them to take a more triumphant part in the evangelization of the world in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**Dr. Godbey, a
Pastor.**

The progress of the Church toward a more scriptural and evangelical faith [says Dr. J. E. Godbey, pastor, editor, author, of Arkansas] has always been marked by creed revisions, and no Church has ever declined by revising its creed. The process of revision has invariably approached a simpler, clearer comprehension of the Great Teacher and his mission. Another fact to be observed in the revision of the creeds is the laying aside of non-essentials. The strife about nonessentials is ceasing. The watchmen on

Zion's walls are seeing eye to eye. The Protestant Church is coming to common ground, and the unity of the Church is becoming more manifest. We can well afford to trust a commission of picked men to essay the task, at least, of giving us a better statement of doctrine, and if it shall be the pleasure of all the great Methodist bodies to join in this movement, a great work will be done.

I have not forgotten my search years ago [says Professor R. H. Bennett, D.D., of Randolph-Macon College], as a young believer, through the Twenty-five Articles of Religion for the fundamental points of Methodist doctrine, and my surprise at finding that several of the great truths in which our Church believes were not contained therein. Later on through the years I have found the doctrines in question in Wesley's Sermons and Notes on the New Testament. We now have a commission appointed which shall cull out of these standards and state in a more convenient and systematic form what our Church believes and what it has believed from the beginning. I feel sure that every one who has been called upon to do class-room work as a teacher of theology has felt the need of such a work and the good results that would follow therefrom.

Dr. Bennett, a
College Pro-
fessor.

I see nothing [says Rev. W F. McMurry, D.D., Secretary of Church Extension] in the position taken by the General Conference, in its adoption of the resolution looking to a restatement of our Articles of Religion, to cause alarm. The Church certainly has as much right and is as competent to-day to state the fundamentals of her faith as at any time in her history. The action of the Conference does not mean a new creed. It only looks to a clearer and more satisfactory statement of the doctrines set forth in our Articles of Religion and Wesleyan standards.

Dr. McMurry,
Secretary of
Church Ex-
tension.

I believe every word of the Twenty-five Articles [says Rev. James A. Anderson, D.D., editor of the *Western Christian Advocate*, Little Rock, Ark.]. But one of the chief needs of the religious world to-day is a clear and living definition of the terms of evangelical religion. Any agitation the movement may produce will result in making the truth to live and to glow with fervor. It is the best answer the Church can make to a gross materialism on the one hand and a wrangling criticism on the other. There is no danger that Methodism will split up over evangelical truths.

Dr. Anderson,
an Editor.

I occupy a position [says Dr. R. E. Blackwell, a layman, President of Randolph-Macon College] in which I have young men constantly coming to me with their troubles on the subject of religion and of their relations to the Church. I happen to have in my hand just now a letter that came to me only this morning expressing great trouble on this very subject; it is from one of the most talented young men that has gone out from our college for years, a layman, whose brother is in the mission field and who I believe wants to go into the mission field himself. He is troubled about this matter in such a way that I believe if we had something that I could put into his hands stating what our Church believes and stands for, he would have his anxieties and troubles removed. I have been through that difficulty myself. Fortunately I had a father who was a minister, and one who did not say, "You are damned if you doubt." But he let me express my doubts

President
Blackwell,
of Randolph-
Macon Col-
lege.

and quietly put me on the track of getting a solution of them. I remember on one occasion I told him I could not believe such and such things that the Church believed. He said to me: "Why do you say the Church believes those things? You take up what some good woman believes, or what you think she believes, and you say the Church believes that. The Church does not believe that." But when I asked him where I could find a statement of what the Church did believe, he had nothing to refer me to except the Twenty-five Articles, the sermons of Wesley, and Watson's Institutes, which I would not read. You cannot get any young man to read them, and if he does read them, they do not help him any.

Now as to the status of this creed, or syllabus, or statement of faith—I do not care what you call it—if I thought it was meant to abridge our liberty and provide something to try men by, I should oppose it with all my power. But we have got the thing entirely in our hands. When it comes back to us at some future General Conference, if we do not like it, we will reject it. We have simply appointed men to see if, working jointly with other representatives of world-wide Methodism, they can express in terminology that is suited to the twentieth century what all Methodists believe. If they fail to do this, why then we will simply not accept their work. If it does express clearly and happily what we do believe, we are still left free to do what we please with it, publish it in any way we like, and give it whatever authority may seem desirable. I believe if we get what is proposed, we will have just exactly what Bishop Wilson said he was willing to have—a series of statements giving the substance of Wesley's fifty-two sermons and Expository Notes on the New Testament. The very fact that the air is alive with critical discussions will make this commission exceedingly cautious as to what they say. They will bring back to us, crystallized, only what the whole Church believes, the old truths with new power. We need fear nothing radical. The commission will try to do what I believe every one of us would like to see done.

Dr. Chappell,
Editor of our
Sunday-
school
Literature.

I do not understand [says Rev. E. B. Chappell, D.D., Sunday-school Editor, Nashville, Tenn.] that the action of our General Conference contemplates any change in the doctrines of our Church, but only a clear statement in terms of the thought of our own time of what we actually do believe and are now teaching. That our Twenty-five Articles do not contain such a statement is a fact well known to every Methodist theologian. They are antiquated in the form of expression, and defective in that they leave out some of the important and distinctive doctrines of Methodism. They sometimes put the emphasis where we would not put it to-day, and are frequently negative and polemic; whereas a great vital creed should be, as far as possible, positive. Such a positive statement as is contemplated, if the terms of subscription be liberal, will be of great service in shaping the religious thought of our people. Meanwhile, the discussion which the appointment of this commission must inevitably precipitate will itself prove helpful in that it will turn the attention of our young preachers from the fruitless discussion of critical problems to a serious consideration of the great fundamentals of the Christian faith.

As an evangelist [says Rev. George R. Stuart, A.M., the well-known evangelist] I have had business men and working men and women converted in my work who have sought a clear and simple statement of our Methodist faith. I favored the restatement, not for the purpose of destroying any of our doctrines or the radical change of any tenets, but for condensation, simplicity, and clearness. I consider a judicious committee of wise men competent to restate our faith, retain its integrity, and greatly add to its usefulness. I see no reason for the retention of the antiquated and inconvenient form in which we find our Methodist creed, nor do I believe that a clear, brief, and modern statement will injure our faith or in any way hurt our usefulness as a Church. The great Methodist doctrines which have formed the foundation of our faith, and which have been the source of our power and effectiveness in the evangelization of the world, will never be surrendered, nor will they be weakened by a more modern and clearer statement.

The agitation growing out of the proposed statement of Methodist faith [says Dr. J. A. Burrow, editor of the *Midland Methodist*] has already awakened an interest in our Church doctrines and stimulated an investigation of our Church history that cannot fail to prove of great value to our people. One group of three laymen, holding prominent positions, sat up until a late hour at night reading and discussing the Twenty-five Articles, very much to their enlightenment as to the doctrinal needs of Methodism. Another layman, who at first thought this movement unnecessary and unfortunate, got out his Discipline and read the Articles for the first time in many years; whereupon he changed his mind and declared that the movement was both wise and timely. Such instances multiply. A revival of doctrinal study, doctrinal preaching, and doctrinal writing is already one of the happy results of the movement in our Church.

These quotations from representative men of our Church abundantly justify the statement made above, that never before has any great movement been started in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, that called forth at once so many hearty and strong words in its favor from both ministers and laymen as this has done—which shows that the Church was ripe for the movement and had long felt the need which it is proposed now to meet. Many were only waiting for some one to give expression to sentiments and convictions already held by them in order to raise their voices and cast their votes for the measure. The statement has been published that this movement was academic in its origin, and supported chiefly by university men; that it is opposed by a majority of our most conservative and influential churchmen, and that it does not represent the mind and wish of the Church at large. It can easily be shown that this statement is not supported

Rev. George
Stuart, the
Evangelist.

Dr. Burrow,
an Editor.

Who Favor
This Move-
ment?

College Presidents and Professors.

Connectional Officers.

Presiding Elders.

Pastors.

Foreign Missionaries.

Sunday-school Teachers.
Lawyers.

Editors.

World-wide Methodism.

by the facts in the case. It is true that out of twenty-five college and university presidents and professors who were members of the General Conference eighteen voted for it and only seven against it. It is also true that a considerable number of our best and truest men voted against the measure because they regarded it as premature and unnecessary. But there is every reason to believe that the majority who voted for it at the Conference represent a majority of the ministers and members of the whole Church. Our connectional officers are thoroughly representative of the whole Church, and out of seventeen of these (counting assistants) who are preachers and members of Annual Conferences, fourteen are outspoken in favor of it. Of fifty-eight presiding elders in the General Conference, thirty-two voted for it; and of the forty-five pastors who voted, thirty were for it. The representatives of the foreign mission fields were well-nigh solid in their support of it. Sunday-school teachers and lawyers abounded among the laymen who voted for it. Ministers and laymen, voting separately by orders, both gave it a majority, the total majority being, as already stated, forty-four. Of twenty periodicals published in our Church fourteen are in editorial sympathy with the movement, as shown either by the votes of their editors at the General Conference or by editorial utterances published since.⁷ Surely, when all these facts are considered, it may be truly said that this overture which goes forth from us to the Methodism of the world represents, as thoroughly as any such movement could, under the circumstances, hope to do, the mind of the entire Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Methodism in our day is indeed world-wide. There are, in round numbers, now in the world about fifty thousand itinerant preachers, one hundred and ten thousand local preachers, and over eight and a quarter millions of members in the Methodist Church. There are four Methodist Churches associated in the most frater-

⁷These are the *Quarterly Review*, *Nashville Christian Advocate*, *Sunday School Magazine*, *Go Forward*, *Midland Methodist*, *Central Methodist*, and the following *Christian Advocates*: the *St. Louis*, *Western*, *Pacific Methodist*, *Alabama*, *Florida*, *Southern*, *Raleigh*, and the *Baltimore and Richmond*.

nal and intimate relations, whose combined force represents the dominant influence in the Methodism of the world, viz.: the Wesleyan mother Church of England, the two great Episcopal Methodist Churches in this country, and the Methodist Church of Canada. The movement now in progress in Canada to unite the Methodist with the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches is being watched with the deepest interest by all branches of Methodism throughout the world. The British Wesleyan Methodist Church, the mother Church of Methodism that is so greatly loved and honored by all her children, has only one-third as many ministers and members as the Methodist Episcopal Church, South—but moral influence and spiritual strength are not measured by a mere statement of numbers. The Methodism of this western world and its missions represents about six-sevenths of the Methodism of the entire world. The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, together, represent in their ministry and membership something more than one-half of the numerical strength of world-wide Methodism. Whatever movement, therefore, unites the two great Episcopal Methodist Churches of this country, reaching out as they do in all parts of the earth, goes far toward being already world-wide in its significance and influence.

The Commission appointed by the bishops to represent the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, will in due course of time, acting under instructions of the General Conference, extend an invitation to other representative branches of world-wide Methodism to join us in this important movement. That branch of Methodism whose coöperation we will naturally seek first of all will be the Methodist Episcopal Church. Between this Church and our own there is a growing spirit of Christian fraternity and an increasing disposition to coöperate in every movement that will enable us to increase the power and influence of Methodism and advance the kingdom of Christ throughout the world. How this branch of Methodism which is nearest to us will receive this invitation, and how they will regard the proposed movement, we cannot foretell; but we express the hope that the attitude of this

How Will the
Proposition
be Received
in Other
Branches of
Methodism?

Church is reflected in the following editorial utterances which have appeared in two of the most representative and influential journals of that largest and most influential branch of world-wide Methodism—*Zion's Herald*, of Boston, and the *Western Christian Advocate*, of Cincinnati:

**Zion's Herald,
of Boston.**

The action of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South [says *Zion's Herald*, of which Rev. Charles Parkhurst, D.D., is editor], in authorizing the appointment of a commission to aid similar commissions to be appointed from other Methodist bodies, acting jointly, in the preparation of a modern statement of the doctrinal system of the Methodism of to-day, is a forward step of first importance. It follows hard upon the completion of a common catechism and order of worship for two of the principal denominations involved, and is a sign of the new ties which bind the Churches represented in the decadal Ecumenical Conference into a spiritual and Methodistic unity.

**Reasons Call-
ing for the
Action
Taken.**

We take it for granted that our readers will agree with the moderate statement of the Southern General Conference, to the effect that the Twenty-five Articles of Religion which we hold in common are not a sufficient statement of our current doctrinal status. It was pointed out in the discussion of the subject in the General Conference in question that these Articles are antique in phraseology; that they were chiefly intended to meet the claims of the papacy as those claims were current in the days of the Reformation; that they do not contain a single article which is distinctively Methodistic or Wesleyan; and that they have not much hold on the life of to-day, except as they indicate the historical roots out of which Protestantism has grown. It would seem clear that as our long-time polemical opponent, Calvinism, has shifted its basis and adopted a modern creed, the Methodist denominations which have had much to do in bringing to pass this changed doctrinal status of the Presbyterian Churches, need not be afraid to declare their faith and to put into modern phraseology the things which are most assuredly believed among them.

**A Forward
Movement
of Great
Promise to
World-wide
Methodism.**

The resolution to formulate a fresh doctrinal statement was not adopted by our Southern brethren without a long, able, and most earnest debate. But the fact that the Southern General Conference, a most conservative body, has taken this action shows the growth of a wholesome and sane spirit of independence in the denomination in question. The body was made up in large part of representatives of the new generation. The old-time spirit of ultra conservatism was in abeyance, and a new spirit of modernity, of evangelism, of progress, of evangelical enterprise, was in the lead. We congratulate Methodism that this step has been taken, and that it has been taken by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. We do not dream of peril in the measure proposed. A sane, well-balanced, twentieth century statement of the chief articles in the creed of modern Methodism is greatly needed. It need not be of such a character as to make the Church hidebound or narrow; indeed, the scholars and saints of ecumenical Methodism should be able to prepare a creed that will reflect

accurately, fervently, and wisely the great truths which the followers of Wesley hold in common, and which will, moreover, broaden its horizon, quicken its activities, and arouse it to undertake great things for the Master whom it adores and follows.

That the General Conference of the Church, South, should [says Dr. Jesse Bowman Young in an editorial in the *Western Christian Advocate*], at its recent meeting, have determined to appoint a commission to restate their doctrinal standards, is not in the least a cause for alarm; but upon the other hand large reason for congratulation. When a denomination fails to recognize the element of growth and development in its intellectual apprehension of truth, and refuses to remodel the fabric of expression to fit that enlarged view, it is inducing decay. We outgrow words as we outgrow garments. Though the truth changes not, our comprehension of it does. A good, healthy individual may as well try to palm off a childhood photograph for the grown man as to substitute his earliets ideas of the terms of a creed for his latter-day conceptions. When the revisers of the New Testament first put their work before the public, they were looked upon with disfavor, and many positively refused to read from the Revised Version. They felt that the ark had been touched. But it was a false alarm, and we all know it now. To revise the Bible from time to time in the history of the Church is only natural. What our Southern brethren have proposed doing is to reclothe their faith in words and terms that have a present meaning for a present generation. And when overtures ar made to our own General Conference two years hence to coöperate with them, we believe our Church will be equally as alert and receive their proposition with favor, adding to their commission members of our body to assist in the great work.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, thus greets the Methodism of the world in the name of our common Lord and in the fellowship of a common faith, and invites all alike, as brethren beloved, to join us in giving to this faith which we have inherited from our fathers a statement at once brief, clear, and comprehensive, such as will enable us the better to declare to our own people and all the world the great doctrines and ideals for which our Church stands, and has ever stood. To do this will unite us in a holy covenant and a larger fellowship for service in the future, and strengthen our common purpose of worldwide evangelism, thus making the work which God has done through Methodism in the past but a prophecy of that larger and more glorious work which he will do through it in the years to come in saving sinners and in establishing his kingdom in the earth.

The Western
Christian
Advocate, of
Cincinnati.

Our Invitation
to World-
wide Metho-
dism.

